

Commissioners Meeting

May 6, 2024

Present: Mark Koors, Jeremy Pasel and Tony Blodgett

The May 6th Commissioners' meeting was opened by Mr Koors who welcomed everyone; he then announced Title VI forms are available for anyone who would like to fill out and turn in at the Auditor's office.

Doug Banks led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag; then Mr Koors offered a prayer.

(Meeting minutes, payroll and claims are emailed to each Commissioner each Thursday before their Monday meeting)

Mr Pasel moved to approve the April 15th meeting minutes, Mr Blodgett seconded and Mr Koors concurred.

Mr Pasel made a motion to approve the claims, Mr Blodgett seconded and Mr Koors concurred.

Mr Pasel moved a motion to approve the \$380,584.72 for the April 25th payroll, Mr Blodgett seconded and Mr Koors concurred.

Todd Houk, Highway Superintendent, told Commissioners he has 3 guys who are going through the "entry level driver training" who will then be offered to take the test. **LTAP** conducted a work zone training class and **IPEP** provided a trenching safety class for the Highway crews. Highway crews continue to grade gravel roads, surveying, sign maintenance, mowing, patching and ditching. Local residents Vickie and Ron Wilson, 510 NW Choctaw Trail, Greensburg, asked the Commissioners what do they need to do to get North County Road 880 East (Lake Santee area) on a list to fix the high-grading (elevated) road which changed the waterflow causing water to overflow out of the fields into yards not having any path to get to the lake during storms. Mr Houk said a catch basin was created in a field to help alleviate the flooding issues. Mrs Wilson said no one ever made a record of complaints made to the Commissioners. Mr Houk will look into this complaint.

The **Fletcher Power** representatives were delayed at an airport, so they will be at the Commissioners' May 20th meeting.

County Building Inspector Kenny Buening had emailed his report to Mr Pasel who read it to the audience: 46 building inspections were completed; 20 new building permits with plan reviews were issued. **Area Plan Director Krista Duval** complete 4 building inspections; issued 4 permit renewals and 3 red tags – one GFI receptacles in kitchen; on final inspection 2 GFI's were not working and a code violation on the clearance of the stairway height, should be 6'8". Each red tag has been corrected and approved. Mr Buening plans to draft letters to send to some Burney residents and Lake McCoy residents informing them of violations of the County's nuisance and unsafe building ordinances. Commissioners continue to receive complaints about several properties in Burney with grass taller than vehicles on the property. Ms Duvall suggested they could do something in the 'residential zones' in the County; Mr Pasel added he prefers to target/tailor specific issues, not over regulating. Mr Koors thinks they need to work on the abandoned cars and the blighted homes.

County Sheriff Bill Meyerrose presented a contract with a new vendor for food services for the jail since the current contract with **Trinity Services Groups** expires June 13, 2024. **Kellwell Food Management's** costs would be \$.90 per meal per inmate as opposed to Trinity's cost of \$1.43 per meal per inmate and conservatively save the County around \$40,000 a year. Mr Blodgett made a motion to approve contracting with Kellwell, Mr Pasel seconded and Mr Koors concurred.

Alicia Nobbe, Health Department, told the Commissioners *Health Department Director Sean Durbin* has modified the local food ordinance: the frequency of inspections will be risk-based inspections. Currently inspections are scheduled every 6 months; now those businesses serving food will be inspected 3 to 4 times a year whereas the Dollar Store (an example) would be inspected every 6 months.

Communications Director Erika Free asked Commissioners for approval to enter into a contract with **Ritter Strategic Services**, who are used by other counties, as a 3rd party review on current policy manual to see how they align with industry standards. She does have funds in her budget to pay for the 'up to 50 hours' contract. Mr Blodgett moved to approve the contract, Mr Pasel seconded and Mr Koors concurred; Commissioners signed the contract.

Animal Control Director Minde Myers could not attend tonight's meeting; she wanted to ask for the Commissioners' blessing to apply for a **Best Friends Grant**. Commissioners are fine for her to move forward with that.

Deputy Coroner Doug Banks told Commissioners the current cooler is not working and local funeral home directors have helped him by allowing him to use their coolers as needed. Mr Pasel made a motion to approve the purchase of the presented 3 body upright cooler at a cost of \$8,199 plus cover shipping costs. Mr Blodgett seconded the motion and Mr Koors concurred.

Mr Pasel moved to approve the subrecipient agreement for the **YMCA's OCRA Grant**, which details the Y's responsibilities and the County's responsibilities as a pass-through entity, Mr Blodgett seconded and Mr Koors concurred.

Commissioners approved the *Uniform Conflict of Interest* form signed by *Greg Coffin* who is a member of the **Lake Santee Regional Waste and Water District**. Mr Coffin is a qualified consultant who evaluates safety procedures and employee development. Mr Coffin has agreed to complete these tasks.

Debbie Horton, LifeTime Resources (Catch-A-Ride) told Commissioners Catch-A-Ride has serves as public transit for rural communities and has for many years. **INDOT** is now requiring County Commissioners to sign a resolution which spells out the duties of **Historic Hoosier Hills** and authorizes them as the applicant for the **Section 5311 and Section 5339 Grants** designating Catch-A-Ride as a public transit. Ms Horton said typically LifeTime Resources works with the Council, but INDOT now wants the Commissioners involved. Catch-A Ride made 17,000 trips in Decatur County last year. Commissioners will study the documents and add this to their May 20th meeting agenda, but Ms Horton said that INDOT has set a deadline of May 17th. Commissioners will advertise and call a special meeting to sign the 2 documents.

The **DORA (designated outdoor refreshment area)** conversation continues as Commissioners receives calls against alcohol in Rebekah Park where families/kids enjoy the new Inclusion Park, the Splash Pad, just being outdoors. Indiana Code for DORA does not allow county governments to opt out or withdraw from an approved designated DORA. Commissioners decided to create an ordinance banning alcohol in all public parks except by requiring special use petitions where they would grant special permissions and then advertise/public notice when and where alcohol would be allowed in a county park.

Mr Blodgett said there are non-toxic options in solar panels whereas most solar panels contain PFAs (polyfluoroalkyl substances), cadmium and lead. He believes the Commissioners should propose/suggest to the *Area Plan Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals* an amendment or mandate to the current Solar Ordinance requiring only non-toxic solar panels, when available, would be permitted in Decatur County and solar panel section must be surrounded by 6' vegetated screens at all times. Mr Koors said any changes they would recommend would be advertised timely for any questions or comments. Local resident **Larry Heger** shared information he found when researching solar panels and PFAs. PFAs are long-lasting, manmade chemicals that do not allow normal bio-degrading when introduced into the ground or air and that is what is used to coat the front and backs of solar panels. He pointed out that manufacturers currently do not disclose the make-up of the panels to circumvent paying duties and anti-dumping laws. Mr Pasel said prohibiting PFAs is great and said there should also be some type of remediation clause for companies' obligations to remedy should something go wrong. **Area Plan Director Krista Duval** told Commissioners they have to make recommendations to the Area Plan Commission who will then review and revise the Solar Ordinance; a public meeting will be held; the APC will vote on the recommended changes and then the (amended) Ordinance would be brought back to the Commissioners for adoption. Mr Blodgett made a motion when non-toxic materials are available, they must be utilized in construction of solar fields and 6' vegetation screening must be planted within 3 years of construction and be put in place on road frontages and within sight of residential areas. Mr Pasel seconded the motion and Mr Koors concurred.

Assured Partners SVP Producer Steve Leist and Managing Director Kevin Krekeler presented the renewal quote of \$528,005 for the county's property and liability insurance coverage for May 22, 2024 to May 22, 2025. Mr Leist said **Liberty Mutual**, the current carrier, offered the best rates for the amount of coverage so he's not proposing changing carriers. The county added \$6,000,000 more in insured values plus the industry continues to see litigation and rates rise in the law enforcement field. He thanked Deputy Auditor Christy Smiley and HR Admin Patty Hensley for their help in sending needed information/data in helping Assured Partners put together this proposal. All insurances are seeing about a 14% increase in premiums. Commissioners will review the renewal proposal and vote at their May 20th meeting.

Rush County Councilman Kyle Gardner told Commissioners Rush County has been awarded a \$780,600 grant for a traffic study on 43 miles of State Road 3, between New Castle- I-70 and Greensburg- I-74. There have been 66 fatalities on this stretch of highway between 2017 and 2021, so this study is hoping to prevent more serious accidents. The local match is \$196,000. New Castle and Henry County are on board in addition to Rushville and Rush County. The Feds prefer that INDOT not be in charge of this study, so Mr Gardner is asking for 1 Commissioners from each county and 1 Mayor from each town to be on a committee; an RFP (request

for proposal) has been drafted, so the Committee would open and score the RFPs. The Feds do not want INDOT in charge of the study, but they would play a role at the end of the study. Mr Gardner asked for a tentative commitment/support of \$35,000 from Decatur County if READI funds aren't available. Mr Pasel suggested using the Commissioners' P & I appropriation and Council President Danny Peters suggested using any available ARPA funds. Mr Blodgett will check to see if there are available ARPA funds at their next meeting on May 28th at 9:00 am.

Economic Development Commission Director Bryan Robbins has been working with a child care provider hoping to add another 150 childcare seats. On June 18th READI will be meeting/have a conversation with **AEC**. During the month of May, a delegation from Indonesia will be visiting farms in Decatur County.

With nothing else to come before the Commissioners, Mr Pasel moved to recess, Mr Blodgett seconded and Mr Koors concurred. Meeting recessed.

The next Commissioners meeting will be May 20th, 2024, beginning at 8:00 am in Room 106.

Attest: _____

Date: _____