

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

October 8, 2024

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Members in attendance were Chair James Argerbright, Vice Chair Thomas Warner, Kim Wheeler, Nicholas Brewer, Joan Western, and John Barrett with Thor Hodges attending electronically. Others in attendance were Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Commissioners Schuman and Baysinger, Commissioners' Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Clerk Cindy Doolittle, Sheriff Spencer, Communications Director Janelle Schmitt, Engineer Brad Allen, Ryan Getts and Brad Ottinger from the Highway Department, Dale Buuck and Christopher Morgan.

Chairman Argerbright called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTING 2025 WHITLEY COUNTY BUDGET & SOLID WASTE BUDGET: Chair James Argerbright asked if there were any questions regarding the 2025 budgets as presented. Councilman Warner made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-14 for the 2025 Whitley County budget, seconded by Brewer and passed with a 7/0 roll call vote. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-15 for the 2025 Solid Waste budget, seconded by Brewer, passing with a 7/0 roll call vote.

2025 SALARY ORDINANCE: Council reviewed the 2025 Salary Ordinance as presented. Hodges made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-16, seconded by Barrett and passed with a 7/0 roll call vote.

CHURUBUSCO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Attorney Andrew Boxberger spoke on the need for an EDC for Churubusco for residential development. Councilman Barrett stated that he had spoken with several individuals about serving on the commission and most stated they would not like to serve, however he was able to meet with Miles Wilson and he was willing to serve. Barrett made a motion to appoint Miles Wilson, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 roll call vote.

IN THE MATTER OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUESTS: The Council reviewed several additional appropriation requests.

- Health Department: \$1,500 for account 20000 supplies. Wheeler made a motion to approve the request as presented, seconded by Western, passing with a 7/0 roll call vote.
- E911: \$33,000 for account 38003 replace/upgrade computers. Brewer made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Warner and passed with a 7/0 roll call vote.
- ARPA: \$200,894 for account 59000 misc. expenses. Warner made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Wheeler and passed with a 7/0 roll call vote.

CLERK ACCOUNT DISCUSSION: Clerk Cindy Doolittle was present to seek approval to pay \$311.13 from her 2024 budget to correct an error that was made in 2022. There was an attorney that was wrongly paid and are not returning the funds. The attorney that should have been paid wants the payment. Barrett made a motion to approve, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 roll call vote.

HIGHWAY VEHICLE PURCHASE DISCUSSION: Highway Director Ryan Getts was present with Head Mechanic Brad Ottinger to discuss with Council the need for several vehicles. Getts stated that for the last several years that vehicles have been neglected and they have unsafe vehicles. Ryan would like to purchase at least 4 vehicles to get them caught up on the vehicles that should have already been replaced. Ryan would like to get the Highway Department on a 5-year rotation to avoid this in the future. There is \$400,000 in the equipment account for 2025 budget, however he is estimating needing an additional \$541,886 if they order them as soon as possible. Motor vehicle highway funds would be used on these purchases. Council appreciated the discussion and has asked that Ryan obtain quotes for the purchase and come back to Council with a formal request once amounts are known.

REGIONAL SEWER AGREEMENT: Commissioners approved an agreement with the Regional Sewer District at the October 7th Commissioner meeting. This agreement would mean that if the Regional Sewer District is awarded grant funding the County would give \$1,000,000 of ARPA funds to assist in getting sewer to areas of Churubusco. If the funds are not awarded to the Regional Sewer the \$1,000,000 would not be given and the County would then need to reallocate the funds quickly to spend before the December 31, 2026, deadline. Councilman Brewer made a motion to approve, seconded by Western, passing with a 6/0 roll call vote with Barrett abstaining.

IN THE MATTER OF THE 2025 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE: Councilman Hodges stated that he will once again state that he would like to see Council meetings be in the evening. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the schedule as presented, seconded by Wheeler, passing with a 7/0 roll call vote.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONERS REPORT: Commissioner Schuman let the Council know that the new jail ribbon cutting ceremony will be October 29th from 3-7 PM.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: Council reviewed the regular meeting minutes of August 6, 2024, and September 4th, 2024. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the August 6th minutes as presented, seconded by Wheeler and passed with a 7/0 roll call vote. Warner made a motion to approve the September 4th meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Hodges, passing with a 7/0 roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Christopher Morgan wanted to introduce himself as being the new owner of Smith Brothers Towing, and wanted to let Council know that they are keeping all current staff and plan to expand within Whitley County.

Dale Buuck gave Council a quick update on broadband for the County. Things are slowly progressing, but he hopes to come before Council for a funding request soon.


There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Argerbright adjourned the meeting at 8:52 AM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Chair James Argerbright



Vice Chair Thomas Warner



Nicholas Brewer



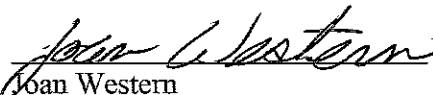
Kim Wheeler



Thor Hodges

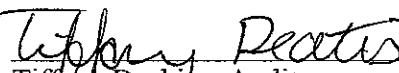


John Barrett



Joan Western

Attest:



Tiffany Deakins, Auditor