

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

December 2, 2024

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, December 2, 2024, at 1:00 PM in the Commissioner's Meeting Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Commissioners in attendance were Chair Chad Banks, Vice Chair Rob Schuman, and Commissioner Theresa Baysinger. Others in attendance were Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Commissioners' Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Highway Director Ryan Getts, Planning Director Nathan Bilger, Community Corrections Director Paula Worden, VSO Joshua Smith, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Billy Maddox and Todd Cook from the Sheriff's Department, Diana DuPont, Charlotte & Bob Terhaar.

Chairman Banks opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

VETERAN SERVICE OFFICE UPDATE: Josh Smith, the Veteran Services Officer, gave Commissioners an update. Josh has had a lot of great feedback from Veterans who like that the office was moved to the first floor for convenience and accessibility.

2025 ANNUAL BID ACCEPTANCE: Highway Director Ryan Getts was present to ask for Commissioners to accept all bids presented for both the highway and engineering office. He has spoken with Engineer Brad Allen and he is good with these bids, minus two bids that were received for fuel as they did not complete the bids appropriately. Commissioners asked that Ryan send the Commissioners the spreadsheet of bids so that they can have that for reference. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to accept all bids minus the two that were wrong, seconded by Schuman, passing with a 3/0 vote. Commissioner Banks asked Getts if he was made aware of some road closures off 14 at rail crossings. Getts stated that his department was not made aware of these closures. The Council had reached out to Commissioner Banks regarding the agenda item for the Council meeting for vehicle purchases and wanted to make sure that the correct process is being followed. Getts let Commissioners know that this was just a request to spend the funds for several vehicles that need to be replaced, if Council gives the approval, he will then bid the vehicles as required by statute. Commissioners would like Attorney Boxberger to come up with a fuel agreement for the Highway Department and any users of the fuel facility. Columbia City would like to start utilizing the fuel facility as their fuel facility needs to be fixed. Once the agreement is made the City would like to start using the facility. Commissioners and Getts have stated that they would like to increase the outside county users fee to \$.20 over cost, and any Whitley County Government departments to be \$.15 over cost. Attorney Boxberger will get this completed.

HEALTH FIRST INDIANA CONTRACTS: Commissioners reviewed a contract with WCCS for the Health First Indiana funds. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve the contract as presented also allowing for payment to be made in January and August only as the schools are not open during the summer, seconded by Schuman, passing with a 3/0 vote.

PLAT APPROVAL & REZONING REQUESTS: Planning & Building Director Nathan Bilger presented a plat to be approved, as well as two rezoning requests.

- Bearz Blue Heaven Addition is a 2-lot re-plat off east Zolman Dr. This was approved by the Plan Commission. Schuman made a motion to approve the plat, seconded by Baysinger and carried with a 3/0 vote.
- Jason and Jennifer Esterline are requesting that their property off west state road 14 be rezoned from Agriculture District “AG” to Village Commercial District “VC”. This received a favorable pass from the plan commission with a 9/0 vote. There was a lot of public comment on this request at the meeting. Commissioner Banks stated that he feels the Plan Commission may have overlooked what some of those potential uses might be if the current owner were to sell. He feels that Commissioners should look at restricting some of the possibilities of uses under the zoning VC. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to table the request, seconded by Schuman, passing with a 3/0 vote.
- Whitley County Redevelopment Commission is wanting to rezone property that they acquired off 700 E for redevelopment purposes from Agricultural District “AG” to Industrial Park/Manufacturing District “IPM”. This came with a favorable pass from the Plan Commission, with several questions from the public. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-21, seconded by Schuman, passing with a 3/0 vote.

PLAN COMMISSION, BZA & REDEVELOPMENT APPOINTMENTS: Commissioners have reviewed the board appointments for the Plan Commission, BZA and the Redevelopment Commission. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve the board appointments below, seconded by Baysinger, passing with a 3/0 vote.

- Travis Baker and Jack Green for the Whitley County Plan Commission
- Joe Wolf for the Whitley County BZA
- Brandon Johnson for the Churubusco Plan Commission
- Jon Kissinger for the Columbia City Plan Commission

Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to table the Redevelopment appointment, seconded by Schuman, passing with a 3/0 vote.

2025 WHITLEY COUNTY TITLE VI POLICY: Commissioners reviewed the 2025 Whitley County Title VI Policy, the only change from the prior year is the date. Commissioner Schuman made a motion to approve, seconded by Baysinger, passing with a 3/0 vote.

STATE ROAD 205 UNOFFICIAL DETOUR: Commissioners reviewed 2 unofficial detours for INDOT for approval. The first request is for Dowell Rd to S wolf Rd, and the second being CR 300 W to CR 300 S to CR 500 W. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve both requests, seconded by Schuman, passing with a 3/0 vote.

FACILITY REQUEST: Commissioners would like to change the facilities request form to add the verbiage that agreements will not be approved until the request is less than 90 days in advance. They can still be given to Cami; however, they will not approve them until closer to the date. There have been some issues that arose with items being approved to far in advance.

MINUTES AND CLAIMS: The claim distributions from November 19, 2024, through December 2, 2024, were reviewed by Commissioner Baysinger. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve the payroll claims, seconded by Schuman, passing with a 3/0 vote. Commissioner Baysinger made a motion to approve the accounts payable claims, seconded by Schuman and passed with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners reviewed the regular meeting minutes for November 18th as well as the November 18th bid opening minutes. Schuman made a motion to approve the bid opening meeting minutes, seconded by Baysinger, and carried with a 2/0 vote, with Banks abstaining. Schuman made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes, seconded by Baysinger, and carried with a 3/0 vote.

OTHER BUSINESS: Commissioner Banks wanted to let everyone know that starting in January 2025 if anyone needs to be added to the Commissioner agendas that information needs to be sent to Commissioners' Assistant Cami Hippenhammer. Attorney Boxberger wanted to let Commissioners know that the EMS agreement will need to be added to the next meeting as it needs to be signed before the end of the year.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Charlotte Terhaar wanted to let Commissioners know that she lives across the street from the re-zoning that they tabled for Esterline's and has concerns with this request. She has spoken with INDOT, and they are already not complying with INDOT requirements, as well as BZA requirements. Dianna Dupont had a few questions and comments for Commissioners as well. She let Commissioners know that she is glad they are tabling items to make sure that they understand potential impacts.

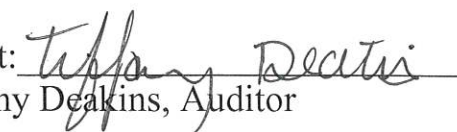
There being no further business and no comments from the public, Chair Banks adjourned the meeting at 1:53 PM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Chair Chad Banks


Vice Chair Robert Schuman


Commissioner Theresa Baysinger

Attest: 
Tiffany Deakins, Auditor

