

**Whitley County Commissioners
December 21, 2009**

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, December 21, 2009 in the Commissioners Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. In attendance were Chairman Tom Rethlake, Vice Chairman Michael D. Schrader and Don Amber. Also in attendance for all or part of the meeting was Auditor Linda Gerig, County Coordinator Amy Crickmore, Highway Supervisor Michael Barton, Planning Director David Sewell, Museum Curator Dani Tippman, Sanitarian Scott Wagner, Ernie Brindley, Charles Acheson, Brad Johnson, Amy Schweitzer, Alan Tio, Lamonte Rhoades and Post and Mail reporter Chris Meyers. Chairman Rethlake called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

IN THE MATTER OF PREVIOUS MINUTES AND VENDOR PAYABLES: The minutes of December 7 and the vendor payables of December 17, 2009 were approved as presented.

IN THE MATTER OF ANNUAL HIGHWAY BID AWARDS: Michael Barton was present to make his recommendations on bids received December 7 for Annual Highway Supplies. After discussion of the bids, Amber moved, seconded by Schrader to accept Barton's recommendations and to add Salesman & Sons to the accepted bids for gravel. The motion carried 3/0. (A complete listing of all bids will be incorporated into these minutes.)

IN THE MATTER OF TAXPAYER CONCERN: Ernie Brindley was present to discuss plowing of snow in subdivisions. Concerns were voiced about untimely plowing and yards being torn up once the plows did arrive. Supervisor Barton spoke on the procedures and stated that he will look into the matter.

IN THE MATTER OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Plan Director David Sewell, Bradley Johnson and Amy Schweitzer presented an agreement with Ground Rules, Inc. Ground Rules, Inc., if accepted, will develop a Comprehensive Plan for Whitley County. The agreement has been reviewed by the county attorney with no problems noted. The cost to complete the Plan is \$64,400 (or \$62,700 if the County commits to assembling a steering committee that can meet during daytime hours). Schrader moved, seconded by Amber, to accept the proposed agreement with Ground Rules, Inc. The motion carried 2/0. (Chairman Rethlake excused himself from the meeting).

IN THE MATTER OF MUSEUM FURNACE: Dani Tippman was present to discuss the replacement of a furnace in the Whitley County Historical Museum. Tippman had presented quotes to county council on December 8, but was asked to further explore her options. A committee of Don Amber, James Banks and Kim Wheeler has been formed to work on specifications for the furnace. After further discussion, Tippman was instructed to wait until 2010 to ask for the replacement. Cum Cap funds will be considered for the purchase.

IN THE MATTER OF REZONING REQUEST: David Sewell was present to explain a request to rezone 119 acres of Agricultural District to Industrial Park/Manufacturing. The petition was filed on behalf of the Dittmer Family Revocable Trust. The property is located on the west side of County Road 600 East, south of the CSX Railroad to County Road 300 South in Union Township. The Plan Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendment and voted to recommend approval of the amendment. Ordinance No. 2009-09, An Ordinance Amending the Zoning Ordinance to Reclassify Certain Property, was introduced. Discussion was held and public comments were voiced by Charles Acheson. After the discussion, Amber moved, seconded by Schrader to approve Ordinance No. 2009-09. The vote was 2/0. (See Ordinance No. 2009-09 on file in the auditor's office).

IN THE MATTER OF EDC INVESTMENT BOARD: President of the Whitley County EDC, Alan Tio and Lamonte Rhodes were present to discuss a request from SubdivisionINFO, a marketing services company connecting land developers and builders with new home buyers. Rhoades is a client of the EDC sponsored business incubation program and is planning to participate in the program's FastTrac New Ventures program that begins in January 2010. The company's expansion is anticipated to create 25 to 30 new jobs in Whitley County by 2015. The EDC Investment Board reviewed a request for \$50,000 in CREDIT funds to support this request. The Investment Board recommends the County allocate \$50,000 to an existing Region III-A Revolving Loan Program to support a loan to SubdivisionINFO through the Region III-A Program. Region III-A does not have \$50,000 available to lend, but can provide administration of the loan. The company would be required to complete and submit an application to Region III-A. The loan would be administered according to the program guidelines (3% interest, five-year term). The Investment Board recommends that the loan require a personal guarantee and that the loan is nontransferable and would be paid in full upon any change in company ownership. The Board recommends that the Commissioners and Council formalize this agreement in a contract signed by all parties involved.

Amber moved, seconded by Schrader, to take a favorable recommendation to county council for the \$50,000 CEDIT funds and to have Region III-A administer the loan. The motion carried 2/0.

IN THE MATTER OF JUNK AND TRASH VIOLATION: Sanitarian Scott Wagner was present to inform the commissioners that no progress has been seen in the cleanup of a property in violation of the Junk and Trash Ordinance. Wagner presented a quote from a local business to clean up and remove the remaining debris. After further discussion, Amber moved, seconded by Schrader, to accept the quote from Pankop Drainage & Excavating in the amount of \$700 to remove all debris except the barn and well cover by January 1, 2010 and add the bill for cleanup as a lien against the property. The motion carried 2/0.

IN THE MATTER OF COUNTY COORDINATOR REPORT: Amy Crickmore presented requests for permission to use county facilities for the Columbia City Fireman to hand out Christmas candy on Christmas eve, Whitley County Fire and Ice Festival January 22-24, 2010 and Junior Achievement Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show on August 7, 2010. All requests were approved as presented. Crickmore reported that a Census Committee has been formed and representatives from Churubusco, South Whitley and Columbia City will meet to organize early in 2010. The Bowen Center would like to be considered for counseling services to county employees. Counseling services are already offered by Lifeworks and Family Care Center. After discussion, Amber moved, seconded by Schrader to add the Bowen Center as another option if employees want to use the service. The motion carried 2/0.

IN THE MATTER OF QUOTES FOR NEW PHONE SYSTEM: Amy Crickmore presented quotes received from three vendors for a new phone system since Embarq can no longer service the current system. After discussing the quotes, Amber moved, seconded by Schrader, to take a favorable recommendation of SDS Communications to county council in January 2010. The motion passed 2/0.

IN THE MATTER OF MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: The reappointment of Gary Hicks to the South Whitley Plan Commission was tabled until January 4, 2010. Communication continues with Just Energy regarding the charge of \$1800 to cancel a contract with them.

IN THE MATTER OF SDI: Residents Kenneth Pequignot and Scott Heironimus were present to inquire about a strong smell of burning rubber coming from the rail plant at SDI. They were seeking guidance as to where they can voice their concerns about the problem. It was recommended that they contact the SDI Corporate Office.

There being no further business or public comment, the meeting was adjourned.

WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Tom Rethlake, Chairman

Michael D. Schrader, Vice Chairman

Don Amber, Member

Attest:

Linda J. Gerig, Auditor