

## WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

January 3, 2022

The Whitley County Commissioners met in regular session Monday, January 3, 2022, 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 Theresa Green and Commissioner George Schrumpf. Others in attendance were Commissioner's Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery, County Highway Director Katy Fry, Planning Director Nathan Bilger, Health Director Scott Wagner, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Councilman Joan Western, Councilman Tim Kumfer, Assessor Kim Erdly, Rob Schuman, Chad Nix from the Regional Sewer District, Steve Henschan from the Regional Sewer District, Mary Hartman from Peabody Library, and Sonya Emerick.

Chair Schrumpf opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** Commissioner Schrumpf opened the floor for a motion to nominate someone as Chair of the Commissioners. Commissioner Green made a motion to nominate Commissioner Banks as Chair, seconded by Schrumpf adding that he would like to leave the voting open for a motion for Vice Chair. Commissioner Banks nominated Commissioner Green for Vice Chair, a second by Schrumpf, both Chair and Vice Chair passing with a 3/0 vote.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT:** Attorney Shipman was available via the phone and stated that he had nothing additional to report.

**2022 BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:** Commissioner Banks listed off the Commissioner's assignments starting with Schrumpf being on the Board of Finance, Community Corrections Advisory Board, Solid Waste Board, and the Plan Commission. Chad Banks will be assigned to the Board of Finance, Highway, Region 3A, Historical Society Committee, Solid Waste Board, and Redevelopment Commission. Commissioner Green has been assigned to Board of Finance, Drainage Board, Solid Waste Board, Emergency Management Advisory Board, Parkview Whitley EMS Council, Joint Advisory, the Economic Development Corporation Investment Board, and the Mayors/Commissioners Caucus.

**LONGEVITY PAY:** Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher informed the Commissioners that the Auditor would like to change the longevity pay date from November 2022 to January 2023 and continue to pay it out in January every year for the previous year. This would help payroll from having to change all the overtime rates twice a year in November and in January. Commissioner Green made a motion to give a favorable pass to Council, seconded by Schrumpf, passing with a 3/0 vote.

**PLAT APPROVAL:** Planning Director Nathan Bilger presented a plat for approval. Birchwood Acres is a 2-lot plat off 200 N. This was originally a 4-lot plat that required rezoning. This was reduced to a 2-lot plat which does not require rezoning. The remainder of the property is an un-platted 10-acre agriculture lot that is up for sale. It would not be able to be platted without being rezoned because it's from the parent track. The Plan Commission approved this plat at their November meeting. Commissioner Schrumpf made a motion to approve the plat as presented, with a second by Green, passing with a 3/0 vote.

**PLAN COMMISSION UPDATE:** Nathan Bilger gave an update on the Fitch property. He stated the county contractor demolished the house on State Road 5 a couple weeks before Christmas and that the property was up to spec. Grass will need to be seeded in the Spring. The property owner will be billed and if the bill goes unpaid it will turn into a tax lien or going through the court system. Bilger also gave a Plan Commission update. He stated Brad Wolfe chose to not be reappointed and Mike Bemus resigned at the end of the year. Commissioner Schrumpf is taking over for Commissioner Green and the Council will make their assignments at their meeting. Commissioner Schrumpf made a motion to nominate Mark Johnson for Plan Commission, seconded by Green, passing with a 3/0 vote. Mark Johnson will be starting under a new term and the Commissioners will take their time selecting the other members.

**REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT:** The Whitley County Regional Sewer District President Chad Nix presented a request to the Commissioners for ARP monies to be used for the Sewer Treatment project. Chad explained they are looking into doing this in a two-phase approach. They are requesting \$1 million to use towards both phases. For phase 1 they are hoping to bridge the gap between the \$5 million received by SRF and asked the Commissioners to put in the additional \$351,000 to make the homeowners bill \$80-\$95 a month. Steve and JPR have some creative ideas to get the bills down even lower and are still investigating some ways to reduce the homeowners out of pocket expenses. They are hoping SRF will give them another \$5 million next year for the next phase. Scott Wagner from the Health Department added that the average cost for a sewer bill in the State of Indiana is about \$100/month. Scott also feels that the estimate cost per homeowner to connect of

\$5,000 is high. Banks stated he would like to discuss this with Baker Tilly before stating the amount they would contribute. Commissioner Green stated she is concerned with helping a specific group of people vs the entire county. Nix stated that they will all benefit from it because they will be doing a blended rate so every time, they do a phase those new homeowners would also get the blended rate. Attorney Matt Shipman chimed in saying that SRF likes to see the County is invested in the same things they are when giving grant money. Commissioner Green stated she supports the sewer project, but she feels like \$1 million is a lot of money. Steve from JPR added that to do at least the phase 1 they will need at least \$351,000, but they would like the \$1 million for both phases. Commissioner Banks stated he would like to call Baker Tilly right away to make sure the rules haven't changed before they pledge a certain amount.

**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT CREDIT CARD:** Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher stated the Auditor had canceled the credit card for the old Highway Director Brandon Forrester and would like to request approval to open a credit card in the new Highway Director Katy Fry's name. Commissioner Schrumpf made a motion to approve the credit card for Katy Fry, seconded by Green, passed with a 3/0 vote.

**ROW PERMITS:** Katy Fry then came up to introduce herself and announced that soon she will be looking to request an amendment to ordinance 2020-14 that refers to all permits and fines and fees for right of way and driveway permits. Fry stated the verbiage in the ordinance only refers to the Engineer as the one to receive and approve permits. She also let the Commissioners know they will approve the right of way permits in the Highway Department unless there's an open cut. If there's any open cut they will bring them to the Commissioners for consideration. Fry had a right of way request from Nipsco on 800 near State Road 14. Commissioner Green motioned to approve the request, seconded by Schrumpf, passed with a 3/0 vote. The next permit was also a Nipsco permit to dig under S 600 E. Commissioner Schrumpf made a motion to accept the request, seconded by Green, passed with a 3/0 vote.

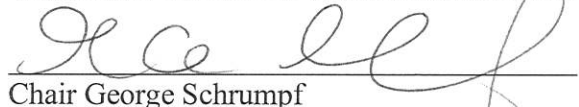
**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UPDATE:** Fry announced that she will be working with the Maintenance Dept to update the building as it has not been updated in a very long time. She also stated they are looking to hire a new office manager next week. The Community Crossings grant is due later this month. Commissioner Green offered to get her help with the grant if needed.

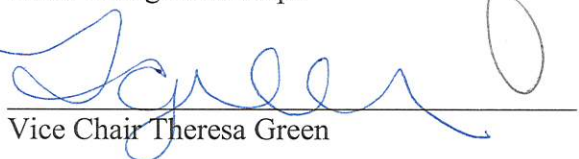
**MINUTES AND CLAIMS:** The claim distributions from December 21, 2021, through January 3, 2022, were reviewed by the Commissioners. Commissioner Banks stated he reviewed the claims and did question a claim from a department for a staff enrichment dinner and it didn't have supporting documentation of a meeting such as an agenda. Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher let the Commissioners know that the department head had already contacted her requesting to have the check voided. Commissioner Green made a motion to approve the accounts payable and payroll claims, seconded by Schrumpf and passed with a 3/0 vote. The Commissioners reviewed minutes from the December 20, 2021, regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Schrumpf made a motion to approve the minutes, with a second by Green and passed with a 3/0 vote.

**PARKVIEW EMS UPDATE:** Commissioner Green said it was brought to her attention that we are behind \$125,000 for our EMS contract with Parkview. Schrumpf let the Commissioners know that we are behind \$200,000 and \$75,000 is coming from the trust with the Community Foundation. Schrumpf suggested we take the funds out of Cedit. Commissioner Green made a motion we take the \$125,000 we owe to Parkview out of the Cedit fund, seconded by Schrumpf. Commissioner Green asked for clarification on what budget it will come out of and if we needed to encumber the funds or if they need to ask for the funds from Council. Schrumpf stated the bill is from 2020-2021 and it should be brought to Council for approval. Commissioner Banks then called for a vote to take it to Council and it passed 3/0 vote.

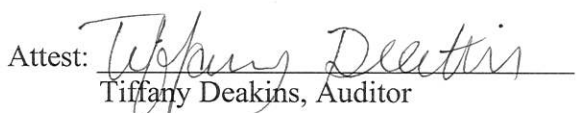
There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Schrumpf adjourned the meeting at 1:51 PM.

**WHITLEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

  
Chair George Schrumpf

  
Vice Chair Theresa Green

  
Commissioner Chad Banks

Attest:   
Tiffany Deakins, Auditor