

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 8, 2022

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Members in attendance were Chair Timothy Kumfer, Thor Hodges, Thomas Warner, James Argerbright, Joan Western and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Commissioner Theresa Green, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Commissioners Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, HR Director Jennifer Shinabery, Sheriff Marcus Gatton, Chief Deputy Jason Spencer, Janelle Schmitt, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Assessor Kim Erdly, Highway Director Katy Fry, Paula Worden, Todd Geiger from Purdue Extension, Maintenance Director Mark Sturtevant, Amy Biggs EMA Director, Coroner Scott Smith, Jorell Tucker from Waste Management, Mary Hartman from Peabody Public Library and Nikki Venable.

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE TRAVELERS CHECK AND RADIO QUOTES: Chief Deputy Spencer was present to answer any questions about the Travelers check that was received December 2021 for a total loss vehicle for the Sheriffs Department. Council agrees to leave the funds in Cum Cap and allow for Spencer to use the funds when he is ready by the usual process. Chief Deputy Jason Spencer and Communications Director Janelle Schmitt were present to go over quotes that the Sheriff's Department received to be able to replace all handheld radios as well as the consoles for dispatch. The cost to replace the handheld radios would be \$257,093.30 and the cost to replace the consoles would be \$478,042. Janelle did state that she would be willing to use \$200,000 out of 911 funds to help pay for this upgrade of the consoles. The Sheriff's Department is asking that the Council use the ARPA funds that were issued to Whitley County as well as the 911 funds. This System was tested for about 5 weeks to make sure that the radios would work in all of Whitley County. Councilman Argerbright made a motion to table the radio quotes, and the motion died with a lack of a second. After a long discussion from Council listing concerns that they have and the Sheriff's Department answering questions Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the purchase of the handheld radios, with a second by Warner and carried with a 6/0 vote. Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the purchase of the dispatch consoles with a second by Barrett. The motion died as the vote was a 3/3 vote.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: Todd Geiger from Purdue Extension was present to give the Council an update for the 4-H youth programs. Todd updated the Council on his two new programs from the past couple of years, the STEM Connection Program and the Robotics Camp.

LONGEVITY PAYDATE DISCUSSION: Council has received information from State Board of Accounts and WIS regarding longevity and using it to compute overtime rates as well as the explanation of why the longevity pay date needs to move from November to January annually. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve changing the pay date for longevity to the January following the year it was earned, with a second by Hodges, carrying with a 6/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF THE 2022 BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS: The Council reviewed the 2022 Board Appointments and Assignments. No changes are taking place for the Council and their current appointments. Councilman Hodges made a motion to leave Michael Schrader on the Redevelopment Commission, with a second by Barrett. Passing with a 6/0 vote.

EMA ENCUMBRANCE REQUESTS: Amy Biggs was present from EMA to request to encumber funds.

EMA:

1000.21000.000.0146	Operating Supplies	\$4,077.78
1000.37004.000.0146	Equip Repair/Maintenance	\$3,363.02
1000.37000.000.0146	Equip & Repair Maintenance	\$6,682.25
1000.37001.000.0146	Training	\$2,305.00

Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the request, with a second by Warner and carried with a 6/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS:

Solid Waste:

1000.11319.000.0124	Planning and Permitting Tech	\$80,000.00
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Councilman Argerbright made a motion, second by Western and passed 6/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF MAINTENANCE FUNDING REQUEST: Maintenance Director Mark Sturtevant was present to request Cum Cap funds be used to cover the required repair costs for the Courthouse elevator as it failed a load test. The failed load test requires a new driver controller be built costing \$27,042. The Commissioners gave immediate approval to allow for the repairs to be done. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the request, with a second by Argerbright passing with a 6/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF WESTVILLE CORRECTIONAL PAYMENT REQUEST: Whitley County Coroner Scott Smith was present with Sheriff Marcus Gatton to discuss the invoice that the Commissioners received from Westville Correctional Facility. There was an inmate that we arrested in Whitley County and transferred and charged in another County. Per State statute if the inmate passes away while incarcerated the arresting county is responsible for the autopsy charges. Coroner Smith did say that is a very high charge for an autopsy, but he is not in control of what other counties charge for their autopsies and that these charges will need to come out of the Commissioners budget. Commissioners stated that they have sought council from the county attorney, and he stated that the County is responsible for the charges. Councilman Western made a motion to approve the Commissioners to pay the invoice as presented. With a second by Barrett, passing with a 4/2 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONER’S REPORT: Commissioner Green gave a report from the Commissioners letting the Council know that the jail project is in the process and that they are moving forward with the Sheriff and trying to get a good plan to be able to move forward. The Commissioners are also going to be meeting with a consultant that works with several internet providers to see if the County can get internet to all of the County not just in certain areas.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: The Council reviewed the December 7, 2021 regular meeting minutes, and after changes were made to update Councilwoman Western made a motion to approve with a second by Argerbright. Passing with a 5/0 vote with Councilman Hodges abstaining. The Council also reviewed the January 4, 2022 regular meeting minutes. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the minutes as presented with a second by Warner, passing with a 5/0 vote with Hodges abstaining.

IN THE MATTER OF OTHER BUSINESS: Scott Wagner asked for approval from the Council to move forward with allowing the Health Department to move into the immunization side. Council agreed with the move of the Health Department. Councilman Kumfer let the Council know that the personnel committee met and approved that the Sheriff’s Department hire a part time transportation officer, this was approved in the 2022 budget already. Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the request, with a second by Western passing with a 6/0 vote. There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Kumfer adjourned the meeting at 9:46 AM.

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Chair Timothy Kumfer

Vice Chair Kim Wheeler

James Argerbright

Thomas Warner

Thor Hodges

John Barrett

Joan Western

Attest:

Tiffany Deakins, Auditor