

## WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

March 8, 2022

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, March 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, Vice Chair Kim Wheeler, Thor Hodges, Thomas Warner, James Argerbright, Joan Western and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Commissioner Chad Banks, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Chief Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Commissioners Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, HR Director Jennifer Shinabery, Sheriff Marcus Gatton, Chief Deputy Jason Spencer, Janelle Schmitt, Scott Schmitt, Anthony Helfrich, Sean Martin, Recorder Rosemary Brown, Clerk Cindy Doolittle, Assessor Kim Erdly, Highway Director Katy Fry, Scott Wagner and Carlee LaRue from the Health Department, Coroner Scott Smith and Mary Hartman from Peabody Public Library.

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

**ABATEMENT REQUESTS:** EDC President Dale Buuck presented two abatement requests to Council for approval. These are both for a 10-year tax abatement on personal property that the company will be purchasing. The first request is for Advanced Materials- Fort Wayne Metals, Halie Gospodareck from Fort Wayne Metals spoke with Council and stated that the company continues to grow, and they hope to hire an additional 24 employees in the next 5 years. Council member Hodges made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-02 approving the Advanced Materials abatement, seconded by Argerbright and passed with a 7/0 vote. The second request is for Impact CNC, Jerry Busche from Impact CNC spoke to Council letting them know that this request will generate around 20 new employees and help them fulfil their 8-year contract with Toyota on their Toyota Highlander line. Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-03, with a second by Wheeler, carrying with a 7/0 vote.

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ELECTION STIPEND:** Cindy Doolittle was present to discuss receiving approval from Council to pay a stipend for Jessica Hockemeyer for election day support. Jessica is the Voter Register/Election Supervisor for the Clerk's office. The Election Board voted that they would like to have Jessica be paid to complete the work that the vendor Microvote has previously done for the County. Microvote charges the County \$2,400 per election day for support. The Election Board has requested that Jessica do the support for the County and that they would like to give her a \$750 stipend per Election Day. This would be a cost savings to the County of \$750 per election day. This will be reviewed yearly, and the amounts may change depending on the election. Councilman Warner made a motion to approve the \$750 per election day for 2022 for Jessica Hockemeyer by way that the County Auditor is advised from State Board of Accounts. Seconded by Western and passed with a 7/0 vote.

**HEALTH DEPARTMENT 2021 ANNUAL REPORT:** Health Director Scott Wagner was present to review the 2021 Health Department annual report. Wagner stated that the Immunization Clinic administered over 10,000 shots in 2021. He also wanted to let the Council know that now since the COVID numbers are down Health Educator Carlee LaRue can start going back into schools to reach out to our youth. The Health Department has made their move and is now located where WIC office used to be.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:** Councilman Kumfer asked that HR Director Jennifer Shinabery speak on behalf of the personnel committee and their recommendations from the last meeting. Jennifer gave the recommendation from the personnel committee that they are in favor of and approving the refactoring for the Highway Departments' Assistant Foreman. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the changes provided by WIS effective for the current payroll, seconded by Western, passing with a 7/0 vote.

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:** Commissioner Banks wanted to give an update from the previous Council meeting regarding the bill the County received from Westville Correctional for an Autopsy bill, he was able to get conformation as to why the bill was so high. Westville Correctional ships their bodies to a University in Michigan for a forensic pathologist to complete the autopsy so that drives up the price of their autopsies. Commissioner Banks also 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 Jail Commander to get a good design chosen. He also gave an update on the Engineering Office and a few new restructures for that office. Mike Knafel will be reporting directly to the Commissioners as well as Jenny Stephenson, and Jenny will now be considered a department head. Commissioner Banks also let the Council know that bridge inspections will be starting and ERI is our consultant on that. The Counties IT provider has increased their prices and Commissioner Banks just wanted to inform Council that Commissioners will be coming to them in the future for additional appropriation requests to accommodate for the 3% increase that was imposed after the budget for 2022 was adopted. There will also be additional appropriation requests coming for the Correctional/Rehab funds and the ARP Funds to cover some of the bills that will be coming in. Commissioner Banks spoke more about the Jail project with Council letting them know that the Commissioners would like to have three Council members be a part of a committee to determine what construction manager should be chosen for this project. Councilman

Argerbright would like to see a public meeting set up between Commissioners and Council to be able to let the public know that the County is building a new jail and that way all Council can be on board with Commissioners.


**IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES:** The Council reviewed the amended January 4, 2022 regular meeting minutes, and after changes were made to update Councilman Warner made a motion to approve with a second by Barrett. Passing with a 7/0 vote. The Council also reviewed the February 8, 2022 regular meeting minutes. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the minutes as presented with a second by Western, passing with a 6/0 vote with Wheeler abstaining.

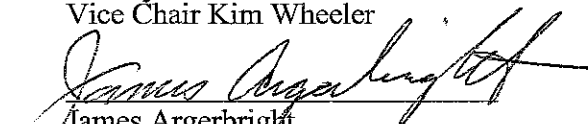
**IN THE MATTER OF OTHER BUSINESS:** Sean Martin gave a quick update on how he feels that the process is going for the new jail. Sean stated that it is moving forward and going well and liked that they were able to tour Fulton Counties jail so they can better visualize the design concept that they feel is best for the County.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Kumfer adjourned the meeting at 9:19 AM.

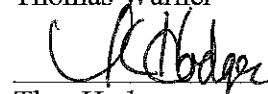
**WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL**

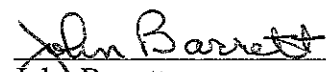
  
Chair Timothy Kumfer

  
Vice Chair Kim Wheeler

  
James Argerbright

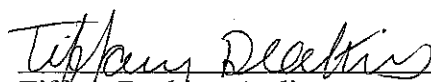
  
Thomas Warner

  
Thor Hodges

  
John Barrett

Joan Western

Attest:

  
Tiffany Deakins, Auditor