

MINUTES
WHITLEY COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Tuesday, December 14, 2021

WHITLEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
1st FLOOR-COMMISSIONERS/COUNCIL MEETING ROOM

MEMBERS	PRESENT	ABSENT	STAFF	
Jim Argerbright	X		Nathan Bilger	Scott Wagner
Frank Kessler	X		Brent Bockelman	Tiffany Deakins
Michael Schrader	X		Cami Hippenhammer	Tamela Tinch
George Schrumpf	X			
Kim Wheeler	X			
Jill Western	X			
GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE			LEGAL COUNSEL	
Steve Western		Kermit Hogeston	Andy Boxberger	
			GUESTS ON-LINE/PHONE	

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Argerbright called the regular meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Argerbright read roll call. All members present and absent are listed above.

LARWILL SEWER UPDATE

Mr. Argerbright gave an update on the project. He stated that a meeting was held with Lana Beregszazi from BCS concerning the billing and progress of the project. BCS was not aware that the connections to the grinder pumps were not complete. The inspector that BCS had hired to watch over the sub-contractors must have missed that. Scott Wagner had spoken with A&B Boring, and they were planning to finish those connections in the spring. Mr. Argerbright stated that the Commission would like to have this taken care of before then. He said that BCS will be looking into that situation with the inspection company and A&B Boring.

Mr. Argerbright discussed the billing of the project and how it had been documented and presented. He stated that they had conversation about being done paying for the project in October and that he felt "nickel and dimed" since that time. He said Ms. Beregszazi would check on those herself and get back with results.

Mr. Argerbright discussed a refund from A&B Boring for the work that has not been completed. The retainage had been released to them as if the work had been entirely complete.

Mr. Wagner stated that Todd Wise could be available to start his work to remedy the electric pedestal in the second week of January. He suggested to have REMC have their work done the first of January so that there would be no delay in hooking up services. There was a question the work from the house to the grinder could be done under the existing easement without further permission from the homeowner. Mr. Boxberger stated that he would need to check on the easement into the private line to the house.

Mr. Argerbright discussed the pedestal. He had stated that, on the Jackson property, the pedestal will be moved to the landscaping between the windows. Mr. Wheeler discussed the style and location of the pedestal on that property. Mr. Buuck asked the approximate cost of moving the pedestal. Mr.

Wagner stated the quote was \$3,700.00. It would be metal, three feet wide, and five feet tall due to REMC requirement for it being read at five feet.

Mr. Argerbright stated that he would like to get this done and houses hooked up. Mr. Boxberger stated that Mr. Wagner needed to try to acquire three quotes for this project for the next meeting for approval.

GATEWAY PARK DRAINAGE UPDATE

Mr. Buuck stated that NIPSCO had been working for the past couple of weeks, after six times of rescheduling, but the NIPSCO part of the project is done. He stated that there is still work to be done by Bercot to finish with grading, drainage, and seeding.

Mr. Boxberger mentioned that one of the properties required sod. Mr. Buuck confirmed and stated that one had already been completed.

CTE TRAINING FOR SMITH-GREEN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Mr. Buuck distributed an information packet. He gave a brief explanation and background about supporting vocational programs throughout the county and introduced Kermit Hogeston from Smith-Green Community School.

Mr. Hogeston gave an overview of the vocational program. He stated that his goal would be to purchase equipment such as a mini mill, 5 axis grinder, and small bench top equipment. This would allow the students to work on a project from “cradle to grave.” The goal would be for students to leave this program with skills and knowledge to hit the ground running and be productive employees. He stated that there is push for students to go to a four-year college, but he wanted to provide an option for students who would not excel at college. He discussed the curriculum he was implementing in classes and the different grade levels into high school.

Mr. Schrader inquired about the interest of students. Mr. Hogeston stated that he had about 25 students per semester in middle school. He stated that the enrollment in high school grades varies. He had classes that included 17, 20, and 12 students .

Mr. Buuck stated that he was not making an official request at this time and may at the next meeting after checking the Indiana code.

Mr. Kessler discussed this program. He stated that it offered an option to the students that choose not to go to college to get training in advanced manufacturing. He stated that we are a manufacturing state, manufacturing county, and the TIF district is definitely manufacturing. The education that would be provided will directly benefit people and employers in the TIF district and the county. He stated that it is workforce development at its best and that it is a prime opportunity for the RDC to help a school provide education to students in the county and to benefit the TIF district and community. Students would come out of the program work ready. He stated that the commission should look at and consider this program.

Mr. Argerbright asked for any further comments. Ms. Western stated that she did not think that any TIF money should be used outside of the WCCS district. She stated that the school districts were in competition, and, with Churubusco having their own TIF district now, the funding to Smith-Green should come only from its own district. She questioned the legality of using funds outside the school district.

Mr. Argerbright stated that he felt there is no fear with this since it is for education. He stated that Jason with Chromasource had addressed the County Council meeting and expressed concern of available workers with Amazon opening in Allen County. If a student gets interested in any of these manufacturing fields, it will benefit the student and give them options if they are not looking at further education.

Mr. Argerbright continued by stating that all school systems should work together. He stated that the RDC had helped WCCS directly, and the amount discussed here would be about 2% of that amount. Ms. Western stated that that amount is irrelevant.

Mr. Argerbright stated that felt we are working to help the TIF district. Education of students to work there and help the employers would part of that. He stated that one of the goals when money was given to WCCS was to also help Smith-Green and Whitko Schools when possible if they had programs that would help our TIF district.

Ms. Western stated that Mr. Argerbright did not make the distinction of Whitley County tax dollars that belong to Whitley County.

Mr. Argerbright stated that Mr. Boxberger would do research on if this would qualify and be within code. Mr. Boxberger asked for confirmation that the education facility is in Whitley County; that was confirmed.

Mr. Buuck thanked Mr. Hogeston for coming and allow him to get back to his classes.

Mr. Bilger stated that the Commission would need to have a formal contract with terms if they wished to pursue this. Mr. Boxberger agreed and stated that a resolution would also be needed.

Mr. Argerbright asked for further questions. Mr. Schrumpf asked if WCCS was working with Whitko on their career training program. Ms. Western stated that the districts do try to work together by not duplicating programs. Her issue was with how the County tax dollars are spent.

Mr. Kessler clarified that the training program being suggested at Churubusco would not be a duplication of programs that are offered at other county schools.

Mr. Schrader stated that the Commission has always been positive about the ability of educating here, employing here, and living here. He felt the proposal needed a good thorough inspection.

Mr. Argerbright asked Mr. Kessler if talks were still open with Whitko and its program. Mr. Kessler confirmed that talks were still open.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Mr. Buuck stated that American Landmaster was still interested in the last lots in Rail Connect. One area of interest is the less desirable cul-de-sac lot in addition to the shovel ready lot.

Mr. Boxberger discussed the cul-de-sac area and asked permission to get an appraisal on that lot. How that is dealt with will depend on the value.

CLAIMS

Claims were presented for review. The claims consisted of:

Carson LLP	\$744.00	<i>Legal counsel fees, October</i>
Carson LLP	\$960.00	<i>Legal counsel fees, November</i>
Star Insurance (bonds)	\$500	<i>Commission member bonds for 2022</i>
Engineering Resources	\$960.00	<i>Gateway Drainage project</i>

Mr. Wheeler made a motion to approve the claims as presented; Mr. Kessler seconded. The motion passed by roll call vote, 5-0.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES

Minutes for the November 23rd meeting were presented for consideration. Mr. Schrader made a motion to approve the minutes with typographical corrections. Mr. Schrumpf seconded the motion. Motion passed by roll call vote, 5-0.

With there being no further business, Mr. Argerbright declared the meeting adjourned at 8:42 a.m.

**WHITLEY COUNTY
REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

ATTEST:

James Argerbright, President

Michael Schrader, Secretary