

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL

October 3, 2023

The Whitley County Council met in regular session at 8:00 am on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, in the Commissioner's Room located on the first floor of the Whitley County Government Center. Members in attendance were Chair James Argerbright, Vice-Chair Kim Wheeler, Thomas Warner, Thor Hodges, Joan Western, Nicholas Brewer, and John Barrett. Others in attendance were Commissioners Chad Banks, Theresa Baysinger and Rob Schuman, Auditor Tiffany Deakins, Deputy Auditor Tamela Tincher, Commissioners' Assistant Cami Hippenhammer, Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery, Paula Worden & Julie Jensen-Kelley from Community Corrections, Coroner Scott Smith, Treasurer Kay Gatton, Assessor Kim Erdly, Health Director Scott Wagner, Sheriff Jason Spencer, Communications Director Janelle Schmitt, Todd Cook, Anthony Helfrich, Billy Maddox, Scott Schmitt, Randy Cokl, Highway Director Ryan Getts, Engineer Brad Allen, Mark Sturtevant, Tim Kumfer, Bill Brice, Janyll Stierwalt from Motorola, Ted Hurley from J & K Communications, and Kelley Digman from ISPC.

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

IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTING THE 2024 WHITLEY COUNTY BUDGET & SOLID WASTE

BUDGETS: Auditor Tiffany Deakins let Council know that in her final review of the budget there needed to be two changes for levy amounts that had already been approved by Council. Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the Whitley County 2024 Budget Ordinance 2023-10, seconded by Councilman Hodges and passed with a 7/0 vote.

Warner made a motion to approve the 2024 Solid Waste budget Ordinance 2023-11, seconded by Brewer and passed unanimously with a 7/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION REQUESTS: The Council reviewed several additional appropriation requests.

- Circuit Court: \$2,500 for account 36005 Exams-Medical/Mental. Hodges made a motion to approve the request as presented, seconded by Barrett, passing with a 7/0 vote.
- Community Corrections: \$57,000 for account 17100 FICA, \$49,000 for 17200 PERF and \$25,000 for 17300 Group Insurance in the Project Income Fund. \$4,000 for 12204 Shift Supervisor in the CC Grant. Hodges made a motion to approve all the requests, seconded by Wheeler and passed with a 7/0 vote.
- Highway: \$30,000 for account 17300 Group Insurance. Barrett made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Brewer and passed with a 7/0 vote.

HIGHWAY MOWER UPDATE: Ryan Getts Highway Director let Council know that he will be coming to Council for an additional appropriation request for two new mower tractors. The second mower finally failed, and both need to be replaced.

IN THE MATTER OF PART TIME PAY: Human Resources Director Jennifer Shinabery was present to discuss with the Council possibly making changes to the way the County conducts part-time wages. Currently the County Council has set a cap of \$22.48 per hour. Jennifer has a suggestion of making a part-time wage scale depending on job classifications. Councilman Hodges made a motion to allow for a 4% increase for part-time as well, seconded by Barrett. After further discussion Hodges withdrew his motion. The council decided to take more time to review and wants the personnel committee to discuss. Warner made a motion to table the discussion until the November meeting, seconded by Wheeler, and passed with a 7/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF CORONER VEHICLE RADIO: Coroner Scott Smith was present to seek approval to purchase a mobile radio for the Coroner's vehicle. The HT radios that are currently being used are old and the batteries are dying. The unit cost would be \$6,000, instead of paying for four handheld radios costing about \$24,000. He might need to come back later and ask for those radios just not at this time. The council would like Scott to try and see if he can obtain any refurbished radios from Copsgear. Scott also let the Council know that he will also be needing to request more funds in his autopsy line item. For 2023 he budgeted for 48 and they are already at 68 for the year. Scott will get quotes and come back to Council at their November meeting.

IN THE MATTER OF 2024 SALARY ORDINANCE: Council reviewed the 2024 salary ordinance and noted that the number of part-time employees is now listed under each department for clarification. Barrett made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-12, seconded by Hodges and passed with a 7/0 vote.

IN THE MATTER OF DISPATCH CONSOLE DISCUSSION: Commissioner Banks stated that the Commissioners voted for a favorable pass to Council at their October 2 meeting to approve purchasing of new dispatch radio consoles. They would like to use ARPA funds to cover the costs, minus \$200,000 coming from E911 funds. The total price would be \$671,273 for the new radio consoles. Communications Director Janelle Schmitt stated that there are very specific uses for the E911 funds and that this purchase would be an adequate use, so she would like to use \$200,000 to cover some costs. Kelley from IPSC was present to give the Council

additional information on the type of requirements that the State has set to allow Counties to join the wire lined 800 system. Commissioners, Council, employees of the Sheriff's Department, and members of the public had a lengthy discussion pertaining to the consoles. Brewer made a motion to approve the purchase of the Motorola consoles, with \$200,000 being paid from E911 funds and the remainder \$471,273 be paid from ARPA funding, seconded by Barrett, and passed unanimously with a 7/0 vote.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: Councilman Warner stated that the personnel committee had voted to allow for the Maintenance Department to hire an additional employee that would split the work of what was being done by 1 person. This change does not increase spending at all, this is just lowering an employee's hours and giving those hours to a new person.

IN THE MATTER OF THE 2024 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE: Councilman Barrett made a motion to approve the schedule as presented. However, after further discussion with the Council he decided to withdraw his motion. Brewer stated that he would like to see the meetings be moved to the evenings or around 3:00 pm. Hodges agrees that he is in favor of night meetings for the public. Wheeler made a motion to table meeting schedule until the November meeting, seconded by Western and passed to table with a 7/0 vote.

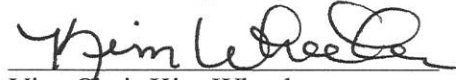
COMMISSIONER REPORT: Commissioner Banks let Council know that the Commissioners have signed an agreement for a new County Attorney with Andy Boxberger from Carson LLP. Councilman Wheeler asked if the Commissioners had moved forward with the appraisals for the land in question for the second entrance of the new jail location. Commissioner Banks stated they have not yet.

IN THE MATTER OF MINUTES: Council reviewed the September 6, 2023, regular meeting minutes. Councilman Hodges made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Wheeler and passed with a 7/0 vote.

There being no further business and no further questions or comments from the public, Chair Argerbright adjourned the meeting at 10:17 a.m.

WHITLEY COUNTY COUNCIL:

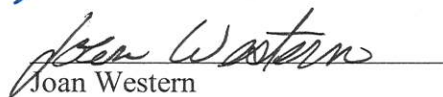
Chair James Argerbright



Vice Chair Kim Wheeler



Nicholas Brewer



Joan Western



Thomas Warner



Thor Hodges



John Barrett

Attest:



Tiffany Deakins, Auditor