
Gibson County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
April 16, 2024

The Gibson County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on April 16, 2024, at 4:45 p.m. at the North Annex Meeting Room.

Prayer was led by Vice President Montgomery, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Members Present: President Warren Fleetwood, Vice-President, Kenneth Montgomery, and Commissioner Nick Burns

MINUTES: The minutes from the April 2, 2024, meeting were approved as presented. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve minutes, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

CLAIMS: Total claims presented on 04/16/2024 were \$2,956,871.17. Commissioner Burns motioned to approve claims, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

Clerk/Treasurer Reports were acknowledged by the Commissioners.

Department Reports

EMS Director Pond told Commissioners that their two new ambulances should arrive in June. He thanked Commissioners for their help on this ARPA purchase. One ambulance will be in the Ft Branch area and the other will be in the Oakland City area.

Highway Superintendent Johnson told Commissioners they have been awarded \$1.5 million in the Community Crossings Matching Grant plus a bridge grant that could benefit the county by \$2.4 million. Superintendent Johnson thanked Michael Stevenson of SJCA for the help in securing these grants.

Sheriff Vanoven presented the reports to commissioners and reported the average jail population is hovering around 90. The employment report shows five openings in the jail; four openings in dispatch with five part-time employees helping fill these positions; one opening in Community Corrections for a field officer; and zero open deputy positions.

Telecommunication Officers Week – Sheriff Vanoven explained the significance of the Dispatch Officers; the “first” first responders as they are truly the first person notified of problems. Sheriff Vanoven described these Dispatchers as well-trained officers; some of the most unsung heroes. A proclamation was read declaring April 14-20, 2024, as National Public Safety Telecommunications Week. The Commissioners expressed their gratitude for these workers and appreciate the fact that the Sheriff is honoring them. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve this proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

Sharon Werne was representing Animal Services and advised everyone on a clinic for low-income citizens of Gibson County. Princeton Vet Clinic will be vaccinating animals for a low fee of \$20. Pharmaceutical Companies donate the medicines. She recently read of new Indiana rabies cases, and she believes it is very important to vaccinate animals. She thanked the Sheriff’s Department for their help assisting on a recent sick horse(s) call. The horses were rescued, and she believes they will now survive.

A recent facebook post requested pet food donations. They have received cash and cleaning supplies, but food is still a bit short; she thanked the citizens for their support.

COMMISSIONERS OLD BUSINESS

Update on Jail Project – Owner’s Representative (OR) George Ballard told Commissioners they recently mailed in their 14th Federal Report. They hope to not hear from them, as no word is a good word. The project is 75% complete. They plan to move the live camera and start painting office areas soon. With Telecommunication Officers Week being discussed, OR Ballard explained that Dispatcher’s will have their own office with chairs for four people and windows. They are looking forward to moving into this new dispatch center in October. They feel the sheriff’s office could be completed by September and jail pods by October.

Update on CR 175 E Railroad – Commissioner Burns got ahold of Toyota Logistics after receiving some complaints. They will be repairing the tracks during July shutdown; they will inform the Highway department regarding the date of repair.

Three I Design – Representative Bill Lewis from Three I Design was present to request approval to advertise for bids on the east TIF road project. There are approximately ten miles of paving, consisting of approximately six roads. Attorney Spindler recommended Commissioners approve. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve advertisement for bids, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

SJCA – Michael Stevenson, representative of SJCA told Commissioners the County has been awarded the maximum grant of \$1.5 million for the Community Crossings Matching Grant. Commissioners thanked Mr. Stevenson. This grant will provide overlays to approximately eighteen miles of county roads. Commissioners thanked Mr. Stevenson and Superintendent Johnson for their hard work in receiving this grant.

Solar Eclipse Gratitude – Commissioners thanked all the county employees/departments that had to work overtime during the recent solar eclipse weekend. They felt there were many departments that played a key role in keeping the County moving smoothly and safely during this long, busy weekend.

The Well, She is Strong Update – Emily Brown told Commissioners that the program is a not for profit for moms in Gibson County. They learn all the things they need to succeed in a classroom type setting, which in turn helps to produce successful kids. They have five moms signed up for the fall class. The Well has multiple partnerships in Gibson County and is always in need of funding to continue training moms. Commissioner Fleetwood asked if there are any funds coming. They are applying to Toyota for a grant that will be awarded in July; they will continue to delve into other grant opportunities. Commissioner Burns will let Ms. Brown know when the next opioid meeting will be held.

COMMISSIONERS NEW BUSINESS

Temporary increase to VISA – Auditor Watkins requested a credit limit increase to Judge Krieg’s VISA card. The current limit on all cards is \$2,500; Auditor Watkins would like to see Commissioners increase the limit on all cards to \$5,000. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve the increase to all cards from \$2500 to \$5000, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

Japan Trip – Tami Hack came before the Commissioners regarding the Gibson County Japan trip. This is the first trip since COVID. She requested that Commissioners allow Commissioner Burns to go on this trip, as he was scheduled to attend the 2020 trip, but it was cancelled due to COVID.

Commissioner Montgomery motioned to sponsor Commissioner Burns trip to Japan, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. With no further discussion, the motion was carried 2-0, with Commissioner Burns abstaining.

Stellar Pathway – EREP representative Pat Hickey came before the Commissioners to give an overview of the revamped Stellar Pathway economic development program. He told Commissioners the program was very successful back in 2010; Princeton was a recipient in 2014. This is an OCRA administered program, that works to strengthen the local economy, enhance quality of life and community wellness. The lead applicant could be the County and they could partner with at least one municipality. If selected, a strategic investment plan would be developed. If awarded the stellar plan, the strategic investment plan would be executed over a four-year period. This opportunity was introduced in January and the deadline to submit the letter of intent is May 1st. After the letter of intent, four counties would be selected in June to receive \$50,000 in which they would develop a strategic investment plan due in November. The State will then pick two of the four counties to designate as Stellar Communities. This would unlock up to \$4 million in community development block grant funding. \$1.5 million for a home investment partnership program through IHDA; \$100,000 in the stellar suited ag program from the Department of Ag; \$25,000-\$50,000 in promotional assistance; \$1.5 million in rural federal aid program through INDOT; \$25,000-\$50,000 in rural develop funding through the department of health. Commissioner Burns feels this is a very good program to involve the County. EREP represents four counties. The county would have to partner with a city/town. Princeton being a prior recipient would not diminish the county's chance of being designated. There could be dollars in the plan to update the county's comprehensive plan. The letter of intent is due May 1st. Mr. Hickey will provide this letter to Commissioners for review. Commissioner Fleetwood asked if there is any buzz about the Ready 2.0 Grant. Mr. Hickey said EREP was awarded with the Ready 2.0; they received the maximum award and will receive \$45 million. The next step is gathering projects. Commissioner Fleetwood commented about the animal services applying for this grant, they are hoping to put together a winning application. Mr. Hickey recommended applying to a Creating Places Grant; it is a 100% match to fund raising. There is no action needed tonight. The letter of interest will not require signatures of Commissioners, rather approval from participating municipalities.

ARPA Approval – Administrator, Debra Bennett-Stearsman was absent, thus Attorney Spindler presented three items recommended by the ARPA Core Committee.

\$20,000 Hopkins Park bush hog; an addition to a previously awarded \$30,000 for the bush hog, making a total of \$50,000.

\$ 3,000 EMS instructor training at Ivy Tech

\$40,708.32 new roof on the former Princeton Clarion building

Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve all three items, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

Vision for a New Outreach Program - Lori Frederick was present to represent this nonprofit community outreach-based program. She told Commissioners they have a vision to secure a resource center in Gibson County in which multiple partners will be located under one roof. They would offer resources/services/programs such as life skill classes, clothing banks, and food banks. The vision consists of the center having an industrial size kitchen so they can learn to cook and bake. This kitchen could also be used as a small bakery where items could be sold to the public at reduced prices and invested back into the resource center. The resource center would consist of small hubs to provide counseling to those that are struggling. One of those struggles, found in Gibson County as with the entire US population, is mental health. The healthcare profession population is not great enough to support this problem. This outreach will try to help break the cycle of mental health by teaching life skills, help write resumes, learn to interview, obtain jobs, and become productive members of society. The Frederick family is working on a community garden in which they will connect with churches in Patoka to help distribute the food which also provides a connection with people and their needs. Commissioners Fleetwood asked the requirements to join the program. Place of Grace provides free services to those age 13 and above.

Beautifully Broken is a new program they have started, which deals with trauma and things that prevent people from moving forward. Commissioner Fleetwood suggested she meet with Andrea Howe to try and get the good word out to the community. He also asked that she come back and keep the Commissioners apprised.

Phase II Southwest Annex Project – Attorney Spindler requested permission to spend up to \$3,000 to re-house EMS and EMA in a different location, likely directly across from the Clarion building. This action is necessary to move forward with the remodeling of the North Annex for the Prosecutor’s office. This cost would include all utilities and amenities, except fiber for internet. Commissioner Burns motioned to approve this expenditure, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

Citizen Comments – Commissioner Fleetwood reminded everyone of the 2-minute time limit to voice concerns and a clock that will keep track of this time limit. All commentors must approach the podium, state their name and address.

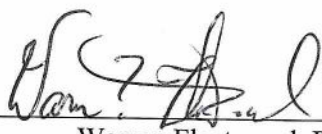
Gibson County Chamber of Commerce Director, Patty Vanoven invited everyone to “Meeting Mojo” to supercharge meeting efficiency and governance savvy. The meeting will be April 25th at the Princeton Public Library from 5:30-7:30.

Roy Lynch asked if anyone had spoken to the State Highway about dead ash trees that have a potential of falling onto SR 64. There are also more on Heights Chapel Road. Commissioner Montgomery will call the State Highway.

Commissioner Burns let everyone know he would like to establish a better relationship with the Council and develop a five-year plan for the County. He is going to start working on this and will keep the other Commissioners apprised of the situation.

With no further discussions, Commissioner Burns motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The vote to adjourn is 3-0.

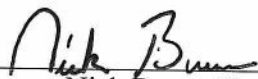
Minutes from the April 16, 2024, Meeting.



Warren Fleetwood, President



Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President



Nick Burns, Commissioner



ATTEST: Mike Watkins, Auditor