
Gibson County Board of Commissioners
Regular Session
June 04, 2024

The Gibson County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on June 04, 2024, at 4:45 p.m. at the North Annex Meeting Room.

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

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

MINUTES: The minutes from the May 14, 2024 Special Meeting were approved as presented. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve minutes, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. With no further discussion, the motion carried 2-0.

CLAIMS: Total claims in the amount of \$2,128,433.39 were presented and read aloud by President Fleetwood. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve claims, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. With no further discussion, the motion carried 2-0.

The Commissioners acknowledged the Clerk / Treasurer reports.

Department Reports

EMA Director McKinney encouraged residents to call 211 to report storm damage. She told everyone that a group would be coming in next week to see if there is a need for debris cleanup. There is an approved grant in the amount of \$12,000 for a generator only at the annex; labor will have to be paid from other funds. The old courthouse generator will move to the North Annex; the quote to move this equipment was \$22,000, so the \$12,000 can support this generator being equipped for the North Annex and the Commissioners will need to come up with the other \$10,000+ to install. There are no other grant dollars that can be used. The North Annex houses servers that are used for backup and that is the reason the generator is being moved to this location. Duke Energy awarded EMA with an \$11,000 grant for emergency preparedness. She has applied for another grant for cyber security and radios for First Responders, etc.

Clerk Smith is present to bring everyone up to date on Clerk’s office news; she introduced her election support employees Leather Chavis and Kellie Landers. She told Commissioners that the office renovation is almost complete, so she invited everyone to visit their newly renovated office. She told the Commissioner that she received a HAVA Grant from the Secretary of the State in the amount of \$34,000. This grant will help the Election Office develop a phone application, which is already being used in Porter and Sullivan Counties. This application will push out election notifications and help provide paperless forms to Gibson County residents. The grant will also provide them with a portable voter’s registration booth (tent). They plan to take the booth to the fair and local festivals in the county. They are in the design phase of the tent and plan to have it ready for the fair in July. The Clerk has volunteered for the County to go through a post-election primary audit as she and her staff have great confidence in the County’s voting process. The audit is scheduled for July 18th and will be open to the public and media; the location is to be determined. She and her staff hope to spread their confidence level to the voters of Gibson County in hopes of boosting voter turnout. There will be a court ordered recount of the Republican County Council race tentatively scheduled for June 20-21, 2024. Judge Meade has recused himself from the matter; Judge Krieg will have to decide if he will oversee the recount. The location is to be determined. Ball State University will be having a CEATS Program for Election Administration, Leather, Kellie and Sherri were accepted into the program; they have

received full scholarships from the Secretary of State. They will have 17 online and in person training sessions. They will graduate from the program in April 2025, which will result in a Certificate of Election Administration, Technology, and Security. Commissioner Fleetwood thanked the Clerk's Office for their work for the people, education and effort to boost confidence by showing transparency in the elections. Clerk Smith thanked her office staff for all the hard work they put into their jobs and trying to assist the public. Randy Hall says Morton County received a grant so the homebound elderly can be assisted in their homes to vote. Leather explained that there are laws in place that ensure a traveling board is provided in every county, the person needing assistance can call the office and they will work with them to find the best way to get them voted. There is security in place for the travel boards.

Health Administrator Shade provided the health department with May reports. They are working with the extension office and local farmers to provide a program called "Food is Medicine". This program will provide food and nutrition education as well as offer free blood sugar and cholesterol tests. Events will kick off at Lafayette Park on June 24th, July 22nd, and August 25th. They will be at the Oakland City Library on July 1st and August 5th. They will be at the Senior Center on July 8th August 12th and a private event will be held at the ARC. Their goal is to join families together to eat. The bag will contain information on whom provided the food. The Health Department will be at the fair with the extension office to provide healthy snacks and a respite spot for families with babies to feed and change diapers. They will also be providing kids bike helmets, kneepads, and first-aid kits.

Sharon Werne with the Animal Shelter told Commissioners that they will host their biggest fund raiser of the year with a car show at Lafayette Park. She told everyone that the shelter is very full, and they are working hard to not euthanize for space. She encouraged everyone to foster animals.

COMMISSIONERS OLD BUSINESS

Update on Jail Project – Owner's Representative George Ballard told Commissioners there is a lot going on. They now have two live cameras to watch the construction progress. They have 350-400 watching the cameras daily. They had to move the kitchen and they shut down the old jail kitchen for the move into the new jail kitchen. TIGER has been helping them get the kitchen up and running. They serve a hot breakfast and cold lunch and dinner. They hope to be back to serving meals in about 30 days. The alternative is very costly and would require them moving all the inmates to other facilities. All cells are installed in the jail pods. They are extremely limited on parking, and they hope this will change soon.

COMMISSIONERS NEW BUSINESS

ARPA Approval – Administrator Debra Bennett-Stearsman presented ARPA Core Group recommendations to Commissioners for approval. There is \$759,822.08 unobligated at this time and before these items are approved.

1. \$400,000 to be set aside for the Health Department to renovate or buy a new building. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote was 2-0. Administrator Bennett-Stearsman told Director Shade that this money has to be under contract as soon as possible, or they will lose the money.
2. \$25,000 to the Sheriff to go towards the purchase of a new squad car. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve this allocation, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote was 2-0.
3. 200,000 for sewer improvements in the unincorporated area outside of Oakland City. Jason will contact Three I to design and bid on behalf of the County. There are about 6 homes in the area. The city will do tap-ins free and take on the residences. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve this project, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote was 2-0.
4. \$50,000 for SBoA federal audits in the years 2024, 2025, and 2026. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve this allocation, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote was 2-0.

5. \$20,000 to EMA for 500 weather radios. Stephanie McKinney will be responsible for developing the program and qualifications for distribution. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve this allocation, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote was 2-0.
6. \$60,000 (\$30,000 each) for Commissioner Burns and Commissioner Montgomery to clean ditches in their district. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve this allocation, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote was 2-0.

Attorney Spindler asked Administrator Bennett-Stearsman what happens if the County has excess money and they are past the deadline. She explained that if it is past 7/31/2024, and the allocation has been made, they will still have two years to spend the allocation. If there is no signed contract, they will need to decide where to spend the money. They will have another meeting in two weeks.


Permission to Allow County Property to be Used for Hay – Attorney Spindler explained about a parcel of land containing approximately 1.84 acres behind the Church, he has received permission to farm the property for hay. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to allow the property to be used for hay, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote was 2-0.

Medical Leave (1) – Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve the medical leave, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. With no further discussion, the motion carried 2-0.

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 commentators must approach the podium, state their name and address.

With no further discussions, Commissioner Montgomery motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Fleetwood. The vote to adjourn was 2-0.

Minutes from the June 04, 2024 Meeting.




 Warren Fleetwood, President



 Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President

 Nick Burns, Commissioner



 ATTEST: Mike Watkins, Auditor

