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Gibson County Board of Commissioners  
Regular Session  
March 05, 2024

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The Gibson County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on March 05, 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.

**MINUTES:** The minutes from the February 20, 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 in the amount of \$2,042,671.45 were presented and read aloud by President Fleetwood. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve claims, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

**Department Reports**

Sheriff Vanoven reported that the average jail population was running around 88. Sheriff Vanoven gave their employment statistics. He discussed the eclipse event planning his department is working on; he told everyone there will be a large police presence during this weekend. They held a command staff meeting at the end of February that included the schools and IT departments. The eclipse weekend will be an all-hands-on deck; no PTO time will be allowed at the Sheriff’s Department. They will continue to plan and hold meetings with local law enforcement agencies. Sheriff Vanoven asked Commissioners if the Courthouse will be open on April 8, 2024. Commissioners have approved this day as a holiday; Attorney Spindler says the Courthouse will be closed, but the Council might ask employees to take a holiday in exchange for this day off.

Extension Office Educator, Abby Heidenreich told Commissioners the extension office had been very busy over the winter holding workshops; she reviewed many upcoming events. 4-H has 440 kids enrolled in their program; the fair is July 7-14, 2024. The eclipse will be happening as farm season is starting to engage; she will try to help encourage farmers to stay off the roads and out of the fields on eclipse weekend to help with traffic flow during the large traffic influx.

EMS Director Pond presented his February reports. His department is also working on eclipse plans; they hope to have additional trucks working on this day.

**COMMISSIONERS OLD BUSINESS**

**Update on Jail Project** – Owner’s Representative George Ballard told Commissioners the roof is on the jail pod; air handlers will go in next. They are going to have to move their live action camera because of the siding that has been installed. Since the project’s inception, he told Commissioners there have been 30 meetings held to discuss the project.

**Update on Animal Services Building** – Sharon Werne told Commissioners about their annual statistics. They took in approximately 530 animals in 2023; there were no euthanasia for space reasons in

2023. They currently have 16 dog kennels with 22 dogs; their cat population is 51, but they do not have 51 cat cages. The ARPA funds have contributed \$800,000 for a new building. They might do a 2-phase project by doing a shell first and finish the inside with funds as they become available. This is more expensive, so they hope they can do a one phase project to save money. Ms. Werne has circulated an AIA detailed document (standard contract) on the project to Attorney Spindler; he recommended the commissioners approve the document. They have been waiting for soil sample approval for the septic system; they are moving on to the next phase.

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

**North Annex (Prosecutor’s Office)** – Attorney Spindler, and Mark Bottomley, lead architect with Three I Engineer, have reviewed the four bids that were opened on February 20, 2024. Empire Contractors, Evansville was the lowest bidder at \$563,460; all bid documents comply, and bids came in lower than expected (around \$108 per square foot). Prosecutor Cochren asked Commissioners to approve the low bid so they can get started. Commissioner Fleetwood thanked Prosecutor Cochren for his practical ideas and help on this project.

Commissioner Burns motioned to accept the low bid for the Prosecutor’s Office renovations in the North Annex, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

**EMS Building Bids** – Attorney Spindler opened bids for this building; there were 9 contractors with a bid packet.

<u>Contractor’s Name</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>	<u>Days to Complete</u>
1)Jerry Aigner Construction – Boonville	\$1,850,850	not readily available
2)Danco of Evansville	\$1,730,000	244 days
3)Empire Contractors of Evansville	\$1,911,460	not readily available
4)Garmong Construction - Evansville	\$1,821,000	not readily available
5)J. Koberstein Construction Princeton	\$1,463,552.33	not readily available
6)Ritzert Co., Inc., Evansville	\$2,014,500	Ten Months
7)Schafer Construction Patoka	\$1,585,131.52	Ten Months
8)Seufert Construction, Ferdinand	\$1,644,000	not readily available
9)Sheffer Construction, Evansville	\$1,535,916	210 days

Attorney Spindler recommended bids be taken under advisement to ensure all documents are compliant. Commissioner Burns made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

### **COMMISSIONERS NEW BUSINESS**

**Moving Date for Commissioners** – It is unknown when Empire Contractors might begin the renovations; Commissioners will need to vacate the building before this work begins; they will move into the Clarion Building.

**Request ARPA Grant Funding for all County Township Territory Fire Departments for First Responder Training** – EMS Director Pond asked if ARPA money could pay for this training; it is costly and some of the smaller departments do not have the money to fund this education. He explained the need for First Responders and their importance.

Commissioner Montgomery motioned to move this request for funding onto the ARPA Core Committee, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

Discussion ensued on the procedure of requesting this grant money. Someone asked how the public would know when/where to find these ARPA meetings; the meeting notices are posted at the North Annex and in the papers. Health Department Administrator Shade told Commissioners that her department has funds for injury and trauma prevention; she would like to partner with EMS and help with

this cause. She will check on funding this. She will notify Commissioner Fleetwood of the outcome. She also might be able to provide money for EMT classes.

**Resolution Opposing CenterPoint Rate Increases** - Attorney Spinder read aloud this resolution, he requests Commissioners sign and approve. All Gibson County Commissioners attended the IURC rate hearing and opposed the rate hike. Gibson County Commissioners want to be placed on a level playing field so there are no challenges from opposing counties/states that do not have this same electric/gas rate. This resolution will unite Gibson County with adjacent counties representing the tax paying citizens. Mark Fehrenbacher suggested the resolution be forwarded to State Representatives. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to approve the resolution opposing the CenterPoint rate increase, seconded by Commissioner Burns. With no further discussion, the motion carried 3-0.

**Spectrum Fiber Upgrade Proposal** – Dan Parrish, the County’s IT Provider came before the Commissioners to let them know there is a communications requirement evolving from the Sheriff’s Department to support body camera uploads. The current system is overburdening the existing service. Also, Gibson County is faced with the shuffling of locations between departments, the courthouse is experiencing an overload in demand; the service has been in place since 2017. Dan Parrish proposes an increase at the courthouse from the current transmission rate of 100 megabit to 500 megabits to allow for the demand. This will also allow communications to shift from the North Annex to the Courthouse. Next, he recommends the County enter into a 12-month agreement with Spectrum to increase the Sheriff’s Department communication rate to a gigabit to facilitate the communications for the body camera networks. It is currently taking thirty-plus minutes to upload a single video file (on a good day). Adjustments can be made at the end of the twelve-month agreement if needed. The reason Parrish suggests only a twelve-month agreement is because they can enter into a second thirty-six-month agreement at the tail-end of the first twelve-month agreement and Spectrum will waive the approximate \$7,000 construction fee.

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

With the various remodeling and shuffling of buildings, Parrish recommends boring fiber from the Courthouse over to the Clarion building where the commissioners will relocate.

Next, the new EMS building can be fed wirelessly by the courthouse but there will be issues with this. He feels it would be better to bore fiber to the new building. There will have to be a clear line of sight for this to work, he feels a radio tower in the height range of 80’ would be required for this; it is unknown how much interference this could cause. The same consideration should be given to the Highway Department; sooner rather than later. The wireless bridge can be removed; it is the most cost effective but is susceptible to lightning strikes. With the increased cost authorized by Commissioners for the Courthouse and the Sheriff’s Department, he feels the County will be able to remove the circuit in the north annex, which will save some money.

Boring fiber will take at least six months to complete, it is a process that will require advanced notice.

**205 S. Main Street, Patoka/Parcel # 26-04-25-102-000.460-020** – Attorney Spindler says the town of Patoka would like to claim this parcel; it was a fire loss, no one bid on it at tax sale, so it belongs to Commissioners. Commissioner Burns motions to transfer this parcel to the Town of Patoka, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The vote was 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.

Randy Hall resides between Franciso and Princeton. He spoke regarding CR 400 E and CR 450 E that “T” onto SR 64. He says there was a recent accident in this area and he feels CR 400 E is very dangerous. He wonders if signs could be installed to help with safety; he wonders if TIF money could be used to widen CR 450. He feels the road could also be closed and blocked to the public and allow only

the one homeowner access to this road. He feels a barricade could be placed on the north side of railroad track to dead-end the road. Commissioners asked him to email more suggestions.

Roy Lynch picked up where this conversation ended; he feels the state should be called to look at taking trees down in the area. Commissioner Montgomery will look at the area and contact the state.

Mark Fehrenbacher, a resident of Ft. Branch was present to talk about the Bridge of Honor and LST 794. Mr. Fehrenbacher has talked to George Pickersgill about this project; there would be no cost to the county. He approached the Commissioners last year about making a joint proclamation for the LST 794, which was named after Gibson County Tennessee and Indiana. He traveled to Gibson County Tennessee regarding this issue, but they were not receptive to the idea. He is now working on Plan B; he requests a 48-star US flag be flown over the Courthouse on July 1, 2024. A 48-star US flag was being used when the LST 794 Gibson County was originally named on July 1, 1955. When Commissioners take the flag down, they can donate the flag with a flag certificate contained in a shadow box to be displayed at the Princeton Library. Commissioners will talk to the Maintenance Director and the Veteran Service Director about the logistics prior to approving this project. Commissioner Burns motioned to table this project until all logistics have been planned, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The vote was 3-0.

Gibson County Chamber of Commerce Director Patty Vanoven reminded everyone of the Farm Bureau Ag Breakfast and Legislative Forum on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at the Princeton Knights of Columbus. She told all political candidates that they had to be placed on the agenda to speak at the Forum.

Bob Schmits asked if there would be a certified Clerk of the Works looking over the upcoming construction projects. Commissioner Fleetwood feels he would say yes to this question, as it is a good idea.

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

Minutes from the March 05, 2024 Meeting.



Warren Fleetwood, President



Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President



Nick Burns, Commissioner



ATTEST: Mike Watkins, Auditor



Commissioner's Meeting March 05, 2024