

Gibson County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
May 14, 2024

The Gibson County Board of Commissioners met in special session on May 14, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at the Southwest 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

AGENDA ITEMS

Highway Department Superintendent Appointment – Highway Superintendent Brandt Johnson has resigned his position. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to appoint Jerry Heldt as Highway Superintendent, seconded by Commissioner Burns. The vote was 3-0.

The ARC / Ride Solutions – Commissioners heard from Becky Guthrie of Ride Solutions. She feels there has been a misunderstanding, she would like to clear the air and answer all the Commissioner's questions. Ride Solutions is funded through INDOT and FTA grants. She presented Commissioners with a resolution requesting a 2025 funding commitment of \$9,000 from Gibson County; this would commit Ride Solutions to providing public transportation to anyone in Gibson County, without restrictions between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. for a nominal fee. Ms. Guthrie feels Ride Solutions is currently the only provider in the county and has been providing the service since 2007. She feels the confusion comes from their partnership with the ARC and the dissolution of that relationship. There has always been a line item in the Commissioner's budget for Ride Solutions, but in February the Commissioners received a letter from the ARC asking them to transfer the Ride Solutions line amount into the ARC's line as the two entities had a mutual agreement to not renew the transportation provider's contract. The ARC letter says they will continue to provide transportation in Gibson County. The State has told Ms. Guthrie that to secure their services in Gibson County, a commitment must be received for 2025. Ms. Guthrie explained that Ride Solutions can provide rides to anyone, but ARC can only transport disabled persons. She feels the drivers for Ride Solutions require more qualifications than those of the ARC, which could be the reason for the dissolution. Ride Solutions needs money for 2024 to continue to operate in Gibson County. Commissioner Fleetwood asked Ms. Guthrie to reach out to the ARC one more time to try and reconcile the affiliation. Attorney Spindler asked Ms. Guthrie to reach out to cities and towns within Gibson County and see if they could get a commitment from them. She does not feel she has enough time as her grant is due on Friday. She asked the County to commit for this year, then she will reach out to the cities and towns for the 2025 commitment. Attorney Spindler feels the Commissioners are going to table the request; he feels her grant application should reflect that there is not a current commitment from Gibson County. She reiterated that if Gibson County does not sign the resolution, there will not be a public transportation provider in 2025 and they will most likely pull out of the county this year as well. The State is adamant that the County make a \$5,000 commitment; otherwise, they will pull the service. Commissioner Fleetwood asked if the funding could be found in the budget. The budget will be reviewed while Commissioners take care of another item on the agenda; they will come back to this item.

Commissioners returned to this discussion after completing the boat ramp agenda item. Commissioner Fleetwood wondered if they could approve the funding request, pending funds being available. Commissioner Montgomery made the motion to approve funding up to \$9,000 for one year, subject to availability of funds and approval from Auditor Watkins and oversight of Administrative Assistant Adams, seconded by Commissioner Burns. Commissioner Fleetwood clarified for the second year, the Commissioners anticipate and expect Ride Solutions to request neighboring cities/towns to help share in the cost of this service. The vote was 3-0.

Gibson County and Hazleton Boat Ramp Transaction – White River Township has an interest in acquiring the property near the boat ramp, that is now owned by the County. Commissioner Burns motioned to make the transfer to White River Township, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The vote was 3-0.

The Commissioners returned to the discussion on Ride Solutions.

Advertisement for County Engineer – Commissioner Fleetwood suggests running an advertisement for two weeks. Commissioner Montgomery motioned to advertise for a County Engineer, seconded by Commissioner Burns. The vote was 3-0.

Proclamation for National Correction Officers Week and National Police Week - Sheriff Vanoven presented a proclamation for National Corrections Officers Week on May 5 – 11, 2024. Commissioner Burns motioned to approve the proclamation, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The vote was 3-0. Commissioner Burns motioned to approve the proclamation for National Police Week on May 12-18, 2024, seconded by Commissioner Montgomery. The vote was 3-0.


Sheriff Vanoven reported to Commissioners that they had an average of 89 incarcerated in April. The staffing report shows the Deputies are fully staffed, but recently learned that one Deputy will be transferring to Princeton Police Department. He recently had two officers graduate from the Academy. Of the 19 Deputies, there are 4 Deputies that are not released to work alone. Then out of the 15 remaining, 2 are assigned to detective responsibilities. The Sheriff is concerned about working shorthanded. The jail needs three employees; Dispatch has four open positions; Community Corrections has an open Field Officer position. Sheriff Vanoven told Commissioners that Quentin Might was presented with his second “Life Saving Award”. The new jail project is approximately 80% complete and the finish line today is projected as November 26, 2024.

SJCA – Michael Stevenson, SJCA Representative told Commissioners that with a new Highway Superintendent in place, they should be able to put things back in motion for the Community Crossings Grant and they hope to advertise very soon. Michael feels the County owes Highway Administrative Assistant Marvel a huge thank you for stepping up and working on a project for INDOT to keep the County from being suspended from all federal aid projects. Commissioners commended Debbie Marvel for her work and keeping Gibson County a qualified participant.

Highway Superintendent - Commissioner Burns wondered when Highway Superintendent could start; Commissioners felt it would be okay for him to start as soon as possible. Auditor Watkins suggested he start on a Monday.

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 May 14, 2024, Meeting.




Warren Fleetwood, President



Kenneth Montgomery, Vice President

Nick Burns, Commissioner



ATTEST: Mike Watkins, Auditor