

Franklin County Commissioners
June 20, 2016
Commissioners/Council Meeting Room 203

Commissioners: Tom Wilson, Tom Linkel and Eric Roberts
Commissioners Secretary: Carol Westerman
Auditor: Stephen Brack

The meeting was called to order by President Tom Wilson and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

SEIRPC – Susan Craig: Susan explained that she had heard from County Council members that there is now interest in applying for the grant for repairing owner-occupied homes. Ms. Craig explained that a grant for \$13,000.00 has already been secured from the US Department of Agriculture. This grant can be used as 10% match to secure the \$130,000.00 state grant at no cost to the county. The issue now is if the county council wants to spend \$21,000.00 to secure the maximum grant of \$350,000.00. Currently there is a waiting list of six eligible homeowners and she would like to expand the list to at least 11 pre-qualified people. A brief meeting for questions or comments was held regarding the grant application and how to sign up an elderly resident. Home owners who are elderly - over age 62, disabled or single head of household can call 812-689-5505 for additional information. The Commissioners signed the application which didn't commit to a specific dollar amount and will now wait to see if the Council will approve spending the \$21,000.00 at its next meeting – June 28. President Wilson asked about a grant for replacing windows at the Laurel Community Center to which Ms. Craig stated a grant was received for a new roof several years ago and a 2nd grant is possible. President Wilson asked Twp. Trustee Roy Hall if his township would be interested in providing matching money for home repair and he stated he would consider in 2017 as the matching money is not in his budget for this year.

John Darlin – asked the commissioners about vacating an alley in New Trenton – Smith Alley. Mr. Darlin explained that the alley is a zoo. The alley is 14 feet wide by 165 feet long and next to his home. He told the commissioners that he had to pay to have a tree removed that blocked his driveway. The tree was on county property and he was told by the Highway Department they have not maintained that area for 30 years. There is also a lot of vandalism of several buildings and a meth lab that was closed down in a nearby trailer home. Mr. Darlin's original purpose was to have the commissioners abandon the alley and give him possession and he would maintain the area. Ms. Polly Maucher whose property adjoined the area in question she is against vacating the alley and giving her ownership of ½ of the alley. She didn't want the responsibility. Ms. Maucher also stated that she and her late husband cleaned the alley for years before he passed away. The commissioners agreed to clean up the alley and trim the trees. Both Mr. Darlin and Ms. Maucher agreed to leave the alley as a public right away.

Doug Foster – ETC – reported on the internet service and how to improve the service to three county buildings. Commissioner Linkel reported the speed is at a "Snail's Pace." Mr. Foster proposed a 3 three contract service for all 3 buildings and a savings of \$760.00 per year. This includes unlimited Internet 25 times faster download speeds and twice as fast upload speeds. Mr. Linkel stated they could not commit to a 3 year contract but were in favor of ending the contract with Frontier but the 911 phone system would remain with Frontier. Mr. Foster will return to have the commissioners sign the new contract.

Highway – Ted Cooley - presented his update. Much discussion was held concerning how the county is spending its bridge tax money. Commissioner Roberts talked about the county keepings its commitments to repair both 6th St. Bridge and Fairfield Causeway. The Commissioners have been

accumulating tax money to pay the 20% share of these projects where as 80% comes from the federal government through the Indiana Dept. of Transportation. Mr. Roberts stated there is enough money to for two federal projects but no extra money for repairing other bridges. Mr. Cooley stated he wants to repair Wolf Creek Bridge #139. Mr. Roberts then stated that there would not be enough money then for both the 6th St. Bridge and the Causeway Bridge. Mr. Cooley stated that the county has put \$120,000.00 in escrow for 6th St. Bridge project in Dec. 2017 and \$347,000.00 for the Causeway Bridge in March 2018. Commissioner Linkel stated he is against spending county money for the repair to Causeway Bridge as the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources is not providing any money. Mr. Cooley asked about backing out of the federally funded project would jeopardize getting future federal money. Franklin County has already been approved for approximately \$1.7 million in federal money. Commissioner Linkel stated that he was doubtful that INDOT would blackball the county for cancelling an approved project. Commissioner Roberts questioned Linkel on his reasoning for cancelling repairs on the highly traveled bridge and allow it to deteriorate further. Commissioner Wilson stated that the bridge structure is good for 20 years. Mr. Roberts stated if they fix it now it could last 50 years. He also stated that they should consider spending the millions later to replace the bridge as opposed to the \$347,000.00 now. Commissioner Linkel demanded to see proof of making repairs now will increase the life span of the Causeway Bridge. At this time no decision was made.

Laurel Road Study – President Wilson stated he wants the Town of Laurel included in the county's contract for a pavement study and that the Town of Laurel has no money to pay for its own study. Commissioner Roberts stated that Laurel received money for road improvement as every other town in Franklin County under Senate Bill 67 in the amount of \$8,620.00. Commissioner Roberts stated he objected due to the fact that every other town would then want the county to pay for their study as well. President Wilson said he would discuss the funding with the Town of Laurel.

Road Repairs – It is noted the Commissioners have more time to decide on the roads they want the state grant money used. The State extended the deadline for grant applications until July 29. Mr. Cooley said he has a list of 27 roads – 9 in each commissioner's district.

Minutes – a motion was made by Eric Roberts to approve the minutes of the previous meeting and a 2nd by Tom Wilson. Motion carried.

Claims – a motion was made by Tom Wilson to approve the claims as submitted and 2nd by Eric Roberts. Motion carried.

Clerks Report – a motion was made by Tom Wilson to acknowledge receipt of the clerk's report and 2nd by Tom Linkel. Motion carried.

Security – a motion was made by Tom Wilson to give Treasurer Veronica Voelker Co – Security Administrator to the LOW System as was 2nd by Tom Linkel. Motion carried.

Internal Control – discussion was held regarding the dollar amount that the SBOA must be contacted for a possible audit. SBOA recommended a \$500.00 amount however; President Wilson was in favor of a much lower amount. The Commissioners agreed that a shortage of \$100.00 by a county employee would be referred for investigation and possible prosecution. Final action on the internal Control Ordinance would be at the next meeting.

Court House Security System – Commissioner Roberts stated he has received several bids for adding more security at the courthouse. The new system will allow for remote access by smart phone or the county dispatchers. He also noted he would be going to the Council for another \$14,000.00 which is in addition to the \$7,500.00 already budgeted. Commissioner Roberts stated he would like to continue security upgrades and focus on one building a year and that next year it would be the Government Center.

Library Board – a motion was made by Tom Wilson to appoint Charlene George to the board and 2nd by Tom Linkel. Motion carried.

FC Convention, Recreation and Visitor Commission – a motion was made by Tom Wilson to appoint Curtis Ward and 2nd by Tom Linkel. Motion carried.

Employee Handbooks – Commissioner Roberts said that the handbooks should be maintained on line and only a few copies be printed. This discussion came up due to the overtime computation is incorrect which caused some employees to be underpaid. Commissioner Linkel stated that the amendments and addendums since the last update are too confusing. No decision was made at this time.

Payroll – a motion was made by Tom Linkel to approve and 2nd by Eric Roberts. Motion carried.


Raises – Commissioner Roberts asked the other Commissioners if they should propose raises in the 2017 budget that was due that day in the Auditor's office. Commissioner Linkel noted that there are many issues with employee replacement. No decision was made at this time.


Public Comment – Betty Lecher asked why some township trustees spend more on township taxes paying themselves and their aides than what they spend on township expenses. Whitewater Township Trustee Roy Hall agreed. He stated the trustees get no direction from the state on spending. The trustees rely on the advisory board for decisions. He also stated that the trustees, commissioner and council should cooperate on spending. President Wilson stated that some trustees do not have any extra money.


Adjourn – with no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Tom Linkel and 2nd by Tom Wilson. Motion carried.

Others in attendance -Betty Lecher, Mildred Simmermeyer, John and Valeria Darlin, Ted Cooley, James Sprague, Karla Bauman, Veronica Voelker, Sara Duffy, Susan Craig, Doug Foster, Marty Hon and Pam Beneker. The names are spelled as per the sign in sheet.

AYE



Tom Wilson


Tom Linkel


Eric Roberts

NAY

Tom Wilson

Tom Linkel

Eric Roberts

Attest:



Stephen Brack, Auditor