

COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

August 19, 2019

The Bartholomew County Commissioners met in regular session on August 19, 2019, in the Governmental Office Building, 440 Third Street, Columbus, Indiana. Commissioners Rick Flohr and Larry Kleinhenz were present. Commissioner Carl Lienhoop was absent. Attorney J. Grant Tucker and Auditor Pia O'Connor were also in attendance.

Chairman Flohr called the meeting to order and gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The first order of business was the approval of minutes for the 8/12/19 Commissioners' Meeting. Commissioner Kleinhenz made a motion to approve the minutes. Chairman Flohr seconded the motion that passed unanimously. (2-0)

Next was the approval of claims. Commissioner Kleinhenz motioned to approve the claims. Chairman Flohr seconded the motion which passed unanimously. (2-0)

Commissioner Kleinhenz read into the minutes the New Permit Report dated 8/12/19 through 8/16/19. Forty-one (41) permits were issued with fees collected of \$8,214 and estimated construction costs of \$10,252,921. A new commercial building for Hubler Auto in German Township accounted for \$7.2 million.

County Engineer Danny Hollander gave the Highway Weekly Crew Report which included the following work: re-used materials from Southern Crossing on new section of Hartman Drive; replaced pipes on Talkington, Knollwood Addition, 930S, and Base Road; ditched along 250E, 930S, Stafford Road, and 550W; replaced driveway pipe on 400W; dura-patched; and mowed in Sandcreek, Clifty, German, Columbus, and Harrison Townships. Milestone paved on 1000E, Sprague Road, Huffman Drive, and Southern Crossing.

Hollander also submitted the County **Highway Monthly Financial** Report dated July 31, 2019, which included the Financial Report, Budget Status Report and Revenue Comparisons for the Highway Fund, Local Roads/Street Fund and the Cumulative Bridge Fund.

He then presented a quote from **Globe Asphalt** totaling \$12,935 for some additional sidewalk and curbing work on the lower portion of Carr Hill Road. Hollander wanted Globe Asphalt to make the repairs while they were already on-site working the Carr Hill Road Sidewalk

Project, INDOT Des. No. 1401864. Commissioner Kleinhenz moved to accept the proposal and approve the expense. Chairman Flohr seconded the motion that passed unanimously. (2-0)

Lastly, Hollander requested **ratification of a bill from Andy Mohr** for air-compressor parts to repair the axle on a highway tandem dump truck. Chairman Flohr motioned to approve the expenditure. Commissioner Kleinhenz seconded the motion that passed unanimously. (2-0)

Next was the first reading of an ordinance authorizing temporary **closures of county roadways due to high water and establishing a penalty** for the violation thereof. Emergency Operations Director Shannan Hinton communicated with emergency responder agencies within and outside Bartholomew County to get their input and received the support of the county's emergency responders to pursue stronger deterrents for violators. The proposed ordinance would increase the fine from \$140 to \$500 for violators who disregard "Road Closed" signs to drive into flood waters. This would apply to non-state and non-city roads only. Disregard for these closures has been an ongoing problem. Gates have been rammed, barricades dodged, signs removed, and signs disregarded even in the presence of patrol vehicles. A few years ago, a driver drove around a barricade and ended up in a field, inverted and submerged in flood waters. Neighboring Jackson County also deals with continuing violations and is currently attempting to increase their fine from \$500 to \$1,000 for more impact and points on insurance.

Chairman Flohr opened the meeting for public comment. County resident Mike Lovelace thought that \$500 was too much and that measures should be taken to alleviate the problem by re-engineering those roads subject to flooding. County resident Chuck Doup reasoned that the risk and cost of rescues justify a \$500 fine and commissioners would be acting with prudence by ultimately saving the county money, assuming there would be fewer incidents. He also compared the handicap parking violation fine of \$250 to that of this violation that puts peoples' lives unnecessarily at risk. Commissioner Kleinhenz said he doesn't like creating new laws that ultimately put more pressure on the penal system which is already overcrowded. He doubted that increasing the fine would keep someone from driving into high water. Chairman Flohr preferred not to charge more than what the state has established for the offense. He proposed that posting notice of a fine on the "Closed Road" signage might prove to be a more successful strategy. Captain Dave Steinkoenig said there are equipment expenses for water rescue and is aware that Jackson County uses fine revenues toward funding their water rescue division and that Bartholomew County also has similar equipment maintenance expense which could be funded by

these intentional violations. Commissioners speculated that even though fines might offset some of the rescue operation costs, litigation by the county attorney for non-payment might, in fact, be a costlier process for the county. County resident Bob Miller pointed out that deteriorated road conditions and/or debris may be present, but obstructed from view. County resident Tom Heller suggested that passage of the ordinance would get press coverage and the public wouldn't likely forget reading about a \$500 fine and thought it might be a successful deterrent. Highway Superintendent Jeff Whittington expressed some frustration, as well, when he said county highway quickly responds to high water dispatch calls to put up those high water/road closed signs and people will drive right around them. Sometimes when they go to pick them up - they're gone. Motorists totally disregard them, throw them in the ditch, whatever the case may be. On the other hand, if signs were not quickly set, then people would complain that no notice of risk was given. With media coverage, he thought people would remember a \$500 fine a lot more than a \$140 fine.

With there being no other comments, Chairman Flohr motioned to deny passage of the ordinance on first reading. Commissioner Kleinhenz seconded the motion that passed unanimously, thereby nullifying a second reading and killing the ordinance. (2-0)

Commissioners acknowledged the gravity of the issue and asked Whittington and Hinton to continue exploring other impactful deterrents including signage changes, installing gates, educating the public, posting fines, etc.

Bob Miller was present to request permission to use the courthouse lawn for the upcoming **National POW/MIA Recognition Day**. The event is set for Friday, September 20th at 6:30 p.m. The day is observed annually on the third Friday of September to honor POWs/MIAs and help to provide closure for their families. Commissioner Kleinhenz motioned to provide the venue for the event. Chairman Flohr seconded the motion that passed unanimously. (2-0)

Next was the consideration of a grant application to **Indiana Office of Court Services** for funds to be used for opioid use disorders/substance use disorders. Director of Court Services Brad Barnes has applied for \$60,000 to enhance the Drug Recovery Court and the Veterans Treatment Court programs. The money would be used in the area of randomized drug testing and for an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs themselves. Grants will be awarded after the submission due date of 9/30/19 and run for one year after awarding. There will be an opportunity for a second year of like grant funding. Chairman Flohr motioned to approve the grant application. Commissioner Kleinhenz seconded the motion that passed unanimously. (2-0)

Chairman Flohr read a request from FM 106.1 The River radio station to use the county's parking lot between Second and Third Streets for the **23rd Annual Hot Rods and Rock and Roll**. The event will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, September 21st. Chairman Flohr made a motion to allow the use of the parking lot for the event. Commissioner Kleinhenz seconded the motion that passed unanimously. (2-0)

Next agenda item was the consideration of an appraisal services agreement with **Universal Valuation**, Inc. (Indianapolis) for 16 county buildings in order to maintain **proof-of-loss valuations** for insurance purposes. For a fee of \$615, the updated values of 14 of the 16 county properties will be provided to the county's insurance agent with no valuation changes.

1. Emergency Operations Center, 131 S. Cherry Street
2. Courthouse, 234 Washington Street
3. Government Office Building, 440 Third Street
4. Court Services, 507 Third Street
5. Purdue Extension, 475 S. Marr Road
6. Purdue Extension Warehouse, 475 S. Marr Road
7. Health Department, 2675 Fox Pointe Dr., Suite #1
8. Highway Department, Salt Barn, 2452 State Street
9. Highway Department, Garage, 2452 State Street
10. Highway Department, Equipment Storage #2, 2452 State Street
11. Highway Department, Timber Storage, 2452 State Street
12. Highway Department, Fuel Island Canopy, 2452 State Street
13. County Jail-Fire Division #1, 543 Second Street
14. County Jail-Fire Division #2, 543 Second Street

Two of the county's buildings will be valued through site inspection for a fee not to exceed \$650.

1. Youth Services Center, 2350 Illinois Street
2. Youth Services Center, Garage, 2350 Illinois Street

Chairman Flohr motioned to sign the agreement with UVI. Commissioner Kleinhenz seconded the motion which passed unanimously. (2-0)

The next Commissioners' Meeting will be held on Monday, August 26, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Chambers. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

BARTHOLOMEW COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

RICHARD A. FLOHR, CHAIRMAN

ATTEST:

LARRY S. KLEINHENZ, MEMBER

PIA O'CONNOR

Absent

CARL H. LIENHOOP, MEMBER