

Ripley County Commissioners Meeting

September 25, 2017

The Commissioners' meeting opened promptly at 7:00 a.m. Monday September 25, 2017 at the Ripley County Highway Garage, Osgood, Indiana. All Commissioners were in attendance as well as Auditor Wagner.

The commissioners discussed installing security cameras at the highway garage along with the possibility of using gas cards for each employee that would register the time, date, and amount of fuel purchased.

A lengthy discussion ensued on appropriations about when and how to use them. Also discussed was using the road money that was previously distributed to the county and not needed for the matching funds for the Community Crossing Grant from INDOT.

With no further business to attend, Commissioner Stratton moved to recess to the annex. Commissioner Linville seconded and the motion passed with 3 yes.

Commissioner Stratton moved to reconvene the meeting with a second from Commissioner Linville. Motion passed with 3 yes and Commissioner Stutler opened the meeting with the Pledge to the Flag. Commissioner Stutler, Linville, and Stratton, County Attorney Ertel, and Auditor Wagner were in attendance.

Maintenance—Mr. John Lohrum 8:20:25

Mr. Lohrum advised the ceiling tile in the courthouse had been replaced and all is ready for the Pumpkin Show.

Commissioner Stratton made a motion to take some of the surplus security cameras at the jail and install them at the highway garage. Commissioner Linville seconded and the motion passed with 3 yes.

Auditor Wagner presented the commissioners with information from Anthem Insurance about restricting the use of the Emergency Room for true emergencies. The commissioners advised to check how the current health program for the county addressed Emergency Room use.

EMA—Mr. Patrick Rose

Mr. Rose advised the Fire Departments were meeting 10/25/2017 to discuss and vote on signing the HAZMAT contract, to begin January 2018, with the team from Cincinnati. If all do not agree the issue will drop.

Technology—Ms. Kelly Vollet 8:47:40

Ms. Vollet answered questions about installing the security cameras and stated she did not have any experience in that area.

Sheriff

Sheriff Cumberworth discussed phone calls being received from Mr. Gary Simpson about his septic system which is on the neighboring property for which he has an easement. Sheriff Cumberworth stated he and the health department fields numerous calls from him against the neighbor, Mr. Steve Marks, and they have responded to all calls. The issue is a civil matter not a criminal nor health matter so there is nothing the health department or sheriff department can do. He has advised Mr. Simpson he will have to address his complaints in the courts.

Sheriff Cumberworth stated there was a need for a phone at the security station for the judges to call if they needed someone stopped before they left the courthouse from a hearing. He will look into the matter.

He also advised Jac-Cen-Del wanted to purchase a sheriff car when one is being retired from the fleet. It would be used by the school resource officer and be marked identifying it as a Jac-Cen Del vehicle not Sheriff Department.

The Sheriff also clarified that the drone he was purchasing was for search and rescue and wanted the commissioners aware of the purchase.

Mr. Tom Huff 9:03:00-9:14:00

Mr. Huff attended the meeting and requested the commissioners advise him the reason he was terminated. He was advised it was for calling the Highway Superintendent at home on different occasions and what accusations he had made against the highway garage employees.

Mr. Huff stated he felt there was problems with fuel tanks being off premises and accountability of some employees not physically clocking in and out.

He also asked Commissioner Stutler if he had received a cutting edge from the Highway garage. Commissioner Stutler stated he had as he had asked for one of the used ones the garage had replaced. Mr. Huff said it was not an old one but a new one. Commissioner Stutler stated he had asked for a used one and the highway garage dropped it off to him. He also stated the highway garage gave the old cutting edges away all the time or took them to Schneiders' Scrap Yard. Mr. Huff then asked who delivered the cutting edge to Commissioner Stutler and Commissioner Stutler responded with "Dave". (Foreman Dave Brunner)

During the discussion Commissioner Stratton stated that if Mr. Huff would provide specific information and names to him he would take action and investigate the allegations. Mr. Huff stated he felt he could not do that in an open public meeting. Commissioner Stratton made the offer to meet privately and was turned down as well.

9:15:02--Commissioner Stratton moved for a break with a second from Commissioner Linville. Motion passed with 3 yes.

Bid Opening—Ms. Kerry McConnell, SIRPC

Ms. McConnell opened bids from Grants Pro Contracting and Bob Crosthwaite on 8 dwellings to be rehabbed.

Commissioner Linville moved to accept the lowest responsible bid from the bidders for each dwelling. Bid Tab Sheet is included.

South Ripley Music Booster—Ms. Heather Sides (812-655-3002)

Ms. Sides requested the use of the courthouse lawn and restrooms October 22 for a fundraiser for the Music Department at South Ripley.

Commissioner Stratton moved to approve the request and have the Music Boosters responsible for the monitoring of the restrooms. They will be provided a contact number in case of emergency and restroom keys. Commissioner Linville seconded and the motion passed with 3 yes.

Health Department—Ms. Vickey Powell

Ms. Powell advised the commissioners of the 50th anniversary of the health department would be celebrated Wednesday, October 17, 2017 in the health department area 8am-5pm with refreshments served 11am-1pm. At noon a special award will be presented.

Also the current Tobacco Coordinator, a part time position for the health department, will also be the coordinator for the Ripley County Drug Awareness Coalition.

Ms. Powell also presented the commissioners with a letter of her resignation effective 10/27/2017 as she had accepted another position closer to her home.

County Attorney Ertel advised the commissioners he had sent the finalized agreement for the damage (\$21,600.00) to the county roads by the pipeline back for signatures.

10:22:44--The Commissioners discussed the accountability issues and accusations raised by Mr. Huff. The whistleblower section of the handbook was reviewed and Commissioner Stratton stated he wanted to consider putting Mr. Huff on administrative leave until an investigation was completed.

Highway Superintendent Ray Toops spoke and stated Mr. Huff had been fired for calling him after hours about the allegations when he harassed and threatened him. He stated he asked Mr. Huff to provide names and specifics but Mr. Huff would not.

Superintendent Toops stated Mr. Huff had received prior verbal and written warnings.

In reference to the discussion of the cutting edge, Superintendent Toops verified used cutting edges that had no use at the highway garage had in the past been given away if someone wanted them. If they accumulated several they were then taken to Schneiders' Scrap Yard.

This also applied to old culverts that were of no use or value to the highway garage. Superintendent Toops Stated the particular cutting edge in question was an obsolete one that did not fit anything the highway garage currently owned.

During this discussion Commissioner Stutler stated without details and names it would difficult to have any investigation and he stood behind the decision of the Highway Superintendent in firing Mr. Huff.

Further discussion ensued on administrative issues but no change to the effective date Mr. Huff was fired was made.

Commissioner Linville moved to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2017 meeting with a second from Commissioner Stratton. Motion passed with 3 yes.

Commissioner Linville moved to approve the claims as presented with a second from Commissioner Stratton. Motion passed with 3 yes.

The Commissioners signed the Payroll Vouchers, Claim Vouchers, and Claims being paid from the commissioners' budget.

With no other business to attend, Commissioner Stratton moved to adjourn with a second from Commissioner Linville. Motion passed with 3 yes.

_____ Gary Stutler

_____ Rodney Stratton

_____ Robert Linville

Attest: _____ William Lee Wagner—Ripley County Auditor