

Owen County Board of Commissioners
Minutes-July 3, 2023

Meeting was called to order by President Gary Burton with the Pledge of Allegiance and Opening Prayer given. Members Present: Gary Burton, Bob Curry, and Joel Lowe. Also, attorney Dana Kerr and auditor Sheila Reeves. Public Sign in sheet attached for permanent record.

Minutes were tabled until the next meeting.

A motion to approve Payroll-\$274,992.82 was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve Regular Claims-\$373,052.16 was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

A motion to approve Out of Cycle Claims-\$57,409.46 was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Copies of the Payroll, Absence Balances, Monthly LOW Financial Report, Cumulative Docket Summary, and the Commissioners Funds were provided for review.

Old Business-None

New Business-

Area 10 Agency on Aging-Chris Myers was present to request consideration for additional funding for their services that are provided to the county and its residents with Rural Transit. Flyers with statistics were provided for review. Members agreed this is an important service for our community and will support any funding options that may be available. The total match amount needed for 2024 is \$40,399.22.

911 Dispatch Director Kathleen Lamb provided information for Hyper-Reach that is an Alert Smart system that delivers local emergency alerts for public safety. This system allows for the county to control and send mass notification to the public. The public can sign up for the system. She was asked to explain the difference in this type of system, in comparison to the WTH program that was just implemented. This system is at the request of individuals, the other is a program that you log in to for information and go to maps. This system can also be used for other notifications such as lost children, event specific, department level direct i.e., EMS, Highway, Sheriff etc. Sheriff White, EMS Director Cris Lunsford, and Highway Greg Melton were present and strongly agreed with the system and the need. Policies and Procedures would be required to be set up with guidelines. A motion to approve Hyper-Reach was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry for a five-year cost of \$27,250. Lamb will take it to the Council for funding approval.

Commissioners also added that due to the storms this last event was extremely tough as they didn't have any communications with the major departments due to power outages and cell towers being down. A motion was made that they would obtain one 800-Emergency Radio for Burton and two fire/hwy for Curry/Lowe to allow them the ability to communicate. Motion made by Burton; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Auditor Reeves presented the bi-annual LOW Associates invoices for the second six months. A motion to approve was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

Highway Greg Melton began with a storm events review of roads still closed and/or portions of them due to downed trees, and power lines. He strongly cautioned residents in cutting trees around the power lines. Lack of communication with his employees was challenging with all the phone outages. He had contacted the auditor to give notification that he had to call in part-time/overtime employees.

Continued issues with the recent 46 Bridge issue were still pending and some further legal direction from Kerr is needed. The State monies in the amount of \$31000 for the county's loss is still pending as well.

Reeves noted to all the Departments present any expenses incurred due to the storms needed to be tracked and submitted as soon as possible to get with the Insurance company.

Burton also noted that he had talked with John Parmley and this is considered an emergency situation and any repairs that are needed can be proceed with.

Kerr reviewed new draft Ordinances for Horse Drawn Vehicle and Horseshoe Regulations. License plates fees, types of wheels, shoes, violation costs, and receipting. Due to some needed changes the Ordinance will be presented at the July 19th meeting for approval.

Lastly Greg thanked several persons for their help throughout the storms, noting Dispatch and Deputy Westgate.

Elected Officials

EMS Cris Lunsford gave an update on the EMS building and hailstorm damage that had occurred. Due to the urgent need to repair and save major internal operating equipment, quotes were obtained, and the materials were to be received on Wednesday and an initial partial payment was required. It was agreed to pay from maintenance-other services in the amount of \$13000.

Sheriff White next offered his extreme frustration with Duke Energy and their lack of response and assistance during the storms. At no time should a State Highway ever be closed for the extended time it was. Requesting reimbursement for any employees that were on duty assisting with the traffic/highway was encouraged. Lack of Communication with all emergency agencies that tried to expedite this situation fell on deaf ears. Burton was to contact the Governors Office in the morning to relate the situation with Duke, AT&T, and the State Highway-INDOT and their lack of response!

Public-DNR Taylor Ardisson was present and introduced himself to members as the Property Manager at Owen Putnam State Forest.

No further auditor comments were made.

No further attorney comments were made.

Commissioner Comments-

Burton presented a current list of known damages for buildings, as well as vehicles relating to the storms on June 27th. Additional claims with the second storm will also be processed as a second event. All claims are deemed an emergency and quotes and bills are to be turned in as soon as possible and will be submitted as one claim. He encouraged all departments to fix what needs fixed, lets tackle it and move on.

A motion to adjourn was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.