

Owen County Board of Commissioners
Minutes-December 20, 2023

Meeting was called to order by President Gary Burton.

Present: Gary Burton, Bob Curry, and Joel Lowe. Also, present Attorney Kerr and Auditor Reeves.

Pledge of Allegiance and Opening Prayer was given.

Minutes were tabled.

A motion to approve Payroll \$249,544.60 (pending SBOA Audit) was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Motion carried 3-0. A motion to approve Docket Claims \$637,567.62 was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0. A motion to approve Out of Cycle Claims \$118,128.43 was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0. A copy of the LOW Financial report was provided, and the Treasurers Monthly Bank Report.

Old Business

A motion to allow Burton to sign the Chamber & Tourism Contract was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

New Business

Planning & Zoning-A copy of the findings of the Plan Commission to Rezone Parcel#60-11-09-300-150.000-022 applicant name Lynn Shoemake/DG and Overland Group from Residential to Business. A copy of Ordinance 2023-020 to amend the Owen County Zoning and Subdivision Control Ordinance was presented and read by attorney Kerr. A motion to approve the Ordinance was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

MyPath Trail System-Kyle Hannon presented an update on the Trail that included grants, bids, and construction timelines. He related that they were not going to be able to use the bridge from over Hancock School. He further requested for the County to add the pedestrian bridge to their list. An agreement will be presented at a later date. The summary sheet is available for review.

RCAP Solid Waste District-Debra Hackman was present asking if the County wished to stay in the District. It was related at one time they were going to withdraw. Lowe agreed that it could be helpful and group exchange.

DNR Timber Sales Distributions for the County have been received in a total amount of \$21,413.94. A motion to divide the amount by the nine departments on the list for \$2379.32 was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Pell Roofing Contracts were presented for review. Attorney Kerr presented concern over the language for Warranties. A motion to approve pending legal edits was made by Burton; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0. Another motion was made to approve the 30% down payment by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

Highway Department-Greg Melton and Chad Walker presented a folder of items for review/approval. Melton began by thanking the Auditors Office with helping with the staff transition.

Next was the Community Crossings Grant increase for the County. Council has already made the initial match, and with the new amount of \$2million dollars an additional \$166000 needs to be approved. He will be requesting it at their next meeting. A copy of the Proposed Road Plan for the CCMG 2024-01 was presented and read for a total estimated cost of 2,003,316. A motion to approve was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Motion carried 3-0. List available for review.

Also noted were the improvements planned for Sidewalks and drainage repairs in Freedom.

Additional ARPA funds of \$248,000 from Council was approved and needs a motion to approve the list of additional Roads added Oberholzer, Otterbein Church, Marley, and Stockton presented was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Original roadway to Chip and Seal was at 14 miles; needs reduced to 12 miles to fit budget. Motion made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0. Williams and Smith Roads need preserved to maintain. The new Paver will be put to good use.

Commissioners had approved the purchase of a new Distributor Truck. Melton related that they would not receive it until 2025 as it is a lengthy process.

Melton then requested permission to pull the tank off the current distributor truck and use for various things for the department. Motion made by Burton; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Melton then asked to also add Tower Rd., Smithville Rd., and Pea Ridge Rd. to the Road Plan. Motion to add was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

He then presented information to possibly get roadways paved by INDOT/DNR that connect with State properties in the county. Kerr is to check on the process and report back. The request must be made the County to add to the Road Plans. Boatdock and Dam Road are probable roads. Melton asked residents to make calls to our State Representatives to support this request. Motion to allow Kerr was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Eel River Bridge #157 has been recommended by United Consulting to make it a "Walking Bridge". A motion to approve to downgrade the bridge was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry.

Mow Trim is down again! Trade in offer of \$25000 was given. Quotes were provided, financial options will be reviewed at the January Meeting.

Sourcewell Quotes were then presented/requested from Curry Auto Center and Southeastern for the purchase of a 2500HD/4WD Work Truck. A motion was made to allow the transfers of funds to equipment \$30000/\$10000 and encumber to go to the purchase was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0. The balance will be paid from the 2024 Budget. A motion was made to approve the actual vehicle was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

Elected Officials-

Purdue Extension Office-Jennifer Abrell and Jim Luzar provided a flyer with updates of the 4-H Programs and donations. A copy of their Annual Contract was presented and approved with a motion from Burton; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

EMS-Cris Lunsford requested permission to apply for a Grant to purchase mannequins. A motion to approve was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0. He later added a request to have marked and set for the upcoming Solar Eclipse in April. A motion made by Burton; seconded by Curry to encumber funds from the courthouse utilities line item to pay for any expenses up to \$30000. Carried 3-0.

Maintenance-Steve Gray presented a request to purchase a Utility Vehicle. There are enough funds in multiple line items to transfer and pay for it. A motion made by Lowe; seconded by Curry to purchase the 2024 Gator. Carried 3-0.

Public Comment-

Jeff Marks offered comments on the Eclipse Event, Roads-encourages everyone to contact State Representatives, information on what the Pazer Scope is, continued Jail discussion and the increase in cost and maybe the county should look at other avenues. Commissioners briefly answered/explained/commented on his concerns.

Auditor-

An email had been received from SRI asking if the County wishes to have a certificate sale this year with the 25

unsold parcels they now hold. Consensus was yes and would be furthered discussed in January. Reeves also asked permission to discuss the Opioid Grant with their Liaison-Joel Lowe. He agreed.

Burton asked Reeves to review a Letter that she had presented to the Council regarding the ARPA Funds and negative Funds. Reeves explained that the SBOA Audit order to pay back two negative funds: one from 2013 and one from 2019. She has corrected those amounts, and the lines are now at a zero balance.

The next step was to move claims from the List that had been approved by both them and Council for a total of \$973406.34 to the ARPA funds to help re-imburse the General Fund Cash Balance.

Her suggestion only was to not move the claims and re-appropriate and open up the ARPA Funds for other projects like the jail, roads etc. The Council voted to table the decision until their January Meeting.

Following discussion, Lowe made a motion to rescind the total amount; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Reeves asked for them to please work with the Council on any changes as they had all originally agreed upon.

Cash balances have greatly improved over the last few years because of the Council has streamlined appropriations and everything is going in the right direction. Burton added it was a benefit to taxpayers.

Attorney-

Kerr related that as of December 31st of this year that the Policies and as of the first of the year we will be getting an online version of Codes and wants to make sure that it is getting done each year.

Ordinance 2023-021 Chapter 37 Open Burning Policies was presented and read by Kerr. There were several concerns with the wording, authority of enforcement, funds for fines, etc. A motion was made by Lowe; seconded by Burton to table. Cris Lunsford was asked to take it to the Fire Chiefs for their comments and concerns. It will be re-discussed at the January Meeting.

Resolution 2023-016 for the 2024 Holiday Schedule was presented and read by Kerr. A motion to approve the Resolution was made by Burton; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Resolution 2023-017 for the 2024 Meeting Dates and agenda submission was presented and read by Kerr. A motion to approve was made by Curry; seconded by Lowe. Carried 3-0.

Resolution 2023-018 for the 2024 Pay Schedule was presented and read by Kerr. A motion to approve was made by Lowe; seconded by Curry. Carried 3-0.

Kerr related he would have a couple of policies to update at their January meeting including the Drug Policy. Administrative Meeting for operational purposes will be held. Related he would not be available the 29th & 30th due to required educational classes.

Commissioners-

Burton related that they are struggling to find a 911 Director and Applications are thin and have not received any qualified applicants at this time. Lunsford is helping and Matt Miller is overseeing as the advisory board. He said they had asked to consider/possibly increase the salary. The amount is low and would like to get it into the price range of \$62k or \$63k and comparable with EMS, 911 and Highway as exempt employees.

He addressed Polly Chesser who was present, and she had sent an email out to fellow member and might be able to hold a meeting on the 28th. Burton would like to put it back out on Indeed and County Website. Kerr says that it can't be advertised before the salary increase is approved.

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