

Owen County Board of Commissioners

Minutes – September 18, 2024 @ 9:00 AM

Commissioners present: Bob Curry, and Joel Lowe, Gary Burton

Auditor: Sheila Reeves Available by phone Attorney: Dana Kerra

Meeting was called to order by President Burton.

The Opening Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and Prayer was given.

The minutes from the September 4th meeting were approved. Motion by Curry, seconded by Lowe, with Burton abstaining due to absence.

Pay roll and claims (see attached) motion by Lowe to approve seconded by Curry 3/0 approved.

Reeves provided an update on the proposed 2025 budget. A special council meeting is scheduled for September 30th for adjustments, with the final adoption to occur in October. The commissioners are preparing for negotiations regarding the insurance line item.

Additional Information

Burton provided an update on IU Health. It has merged or been bought out by another company, which will not affect insurance coverage through the end of this year. Negotiations for the new insurance terms will take place in November. A 20% increase was initially planned, but the final impact is still uncertain. The new parent company is a division of Blue Cross Blue Shield, which is generally a good provider but typically more expensive. More details will be available as the situation develops. For now, nothing will change until the end of the year.

Jail Update

An environmental study was completed, and a letter from the Rogers Group about property ownership was received.

-The Board of Works and Safety letter was reviewed and approved for commissioner signatures.

Plan Commission

The Plan Commission had a rezone request at their August meeting for a property owned by Sherman C. Properties, LLC. They were requesting to rezone the property from single-family residential to multifamily. The property is only one acre. The Planning Commission gave an unfavorable recommendation. The owner Andrew Couch with Sherman C. Properties LLC was present and reiterated his conversation at the Plan Commission meeting. Motion by Curry that we go along with the unfavorable recommendation that the rezone is denied, seconded by Lowe 3/0, approved.

Treasurer Confidentiality Agreement

Kerr confirmed that the Treasurer's confidentiality agreement had been reviewed. The contract is negotiable. Motion made by Lowe, seconded by Curry 3/0 approved.

Recorder Contract for Media Conversion

Kerr confirmed the contract to convert books to electronic records for searchability. Treasurer Foster will sign the agreement. Motion by Curry, seconded by Lowe 3/0 approved.

911 Maintenance Agreement

Kerr confirmed that she had reviewed the 911 maintenance agreement and had no concerns. Last night, the company responded to some requested changes, including making them responsible for the FCC licensing and all equipment listed on the back page of the contract. The commissioners discussed the minor changes, which did not affect the overall terms of the maintenance agreement. The agreement involves changing providers from JMK to ECS, and it is strictly a maintenance agreement for radios within the Dispatch Center. Lowe made a motion to approve, seconded by Curry, 3/0 approved. Due to switching of companies, Kerr will get a letter of termination out to the current company.

Burn Ban Declaration

EMA Director Jack White requested to implement a Burn Ban Declaration. Motion by Curry, seconded by Lowe 3/0 approved. Commissioners aligned with 35 other counties in the state, giving the fire department authority to manage fires deemed hazardous.

Highway Department Update

Beach Church Road: Culvert replacement is on track, with the deck poured and curing.

Bandy Road and Class Road Bridges: Work continues, with Class Road Bridge expected to begin in October.

Bridge Number 14 Federal Grant Application: The cost estimate for Bridge Number 14 was discussed. Originally estimated at \$3.2 million, the project now stands at over \$5 million. Multiple alternatives are being considered, including restoration, which could save money. The County Council has formed a committee to assess the situation. It was suggested that a meeting be scheduled to discuss the best option moving forward, including possibly doing a complete restoration instead of replacement. The commissioners will meet with council members to review these alternatives before making a final decision.

Discussion on Bridges 14 and 15: The need to maintain Bridge 15 in good repair was addressed, with contractors and vendors agreeing that the bridge will eventually need to be replaced. However, no immediate action is required. The commissioners discussed the challenges posed by the geography of the area, including a rock bottom that prevents the installation

of a box culvert. The consensus was to move forward with repairs to Bridge 14 and delay applying for a grant for Bridge 15. Motion by Lowe for approval, seconded by Curry. Vote: 3/0, approved.

Unofficial Detour Agreement and Weight Limit Signage:

- Letter of Understanding: Kerr confirmed the Letter of Understanding for the detour related to State Road 67. The official detour signage will be provided by the state, while the county will be responsible for the unofficial detour signage, including weight restrictions.
- Signage Plan: The commissioners agreed to post both a "No Truck Traffic" sign and an 8-ton weight limit sign for the unofficial detour. Agricultural and local traffic will be exempt from the weight restrictions.
- Duration: The detour is expected to be in place from October 1st to November 30th. A motion to approve the Letter of Understanding and the signage plan made by Lowe, seconded by Curry 3/0, approved.

Park View Estates Subdivision Roadways

The commissioners agreed to adopt Park View Estates into the county road system, pending an ordinance, as residents had met the requirements for road quality. Motion by Lowe, seconded by Curry. Vote: 3/0, approved. An ordinance was proposed for approval as well.

Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) for 2025

The next grant call is January 5th, 2025. The commissioners agreed to hold an administrative meeting in October to decide on road priorities for the grant.

Chip Seal and Work Hours

There was a delay in the chip seal process due to driver availability. Work will resume on Monday. The commissioners decided to change the highway department work hours from 10-hour days to 8-hour days, following the ordinance.

Workers' Compensation Cases

Two workers remain on workers' compensation, affecting the availability of truck drivers. One worker is ready to return but needs clearance from the workers' compensation doctor.

Public Comment

- Will Daubenspeck: Raised concerns about an injunction on Broken Arrow. The commissioners stated that the matter was in the legal process and agreed to follow up.
- Jeff Marks: Inquired about the 2025 budget availability, an ordinance for brush cutting, and the status of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The commissioners provided updates and committed to reviewing the old ordinance.

Closing Remarks

The commissioners mentioned the upcoming apple butter festival and thanked Steve for preparing the courthouse lawn. The meeting was adjourned motion by Burton, seconded by Curry 3/0 approved.