

**NOBLE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Monday October 2, 2023**  
**1:00 PM NOBLE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**  
**NOBLE COUNTY NEW ANNEX**

**PRESENT:**

Mary Wysong  
George Bennett  
Trey Forbes  
Tom Janes  
Brandon Chordas  
Doug Harp  
Max Franklin

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Jackie Knafel, Noble County Coordinator  
Dennis Graft, County Attorney via telephone  
Matt Getts, KPC Media  
Gary Leatherman, Noble County Commissioners

George Bennett, Council President, brought the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 pm

**MINUTES**

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as written with a motion from Tom Janes. Brandon Chordas seconded and the motion carried 5-0 with Doug Harp and Max Franklin abstaining from the vote as they were not present at the September meeting.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Doug Harp reported on the Region III-A meeting that he had recently attended.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Gary Leatherman and Zack Smith were present for discussion about a possible future purchase of a building in the area for storage of files etc..... A possible location would be the Bonar building that is the temporary housing of the probation department. This would also come with some additional parking spaces. The current rental agreement will end the end of this year and it is the thought that if the county would decide to purchase the parcel, then the rent in 2024 could be applied toward the purchase of the building. No costs or commitments have been made at this time so this information is a "heads up" conversation.

Jackie Knafel informed the council that the new annex construction fund is nearing a close with only one more invoice to be received. She has had correspondence with Lisa Lee – our bond counsel as to best handle the \$300,000.00 + remaining in the fund. Jacke shared the e-mail correspondence from Lisa Lee.

Independent nurse's contract – with the current resignation of the health Nurse and no applications being received at this time, there is a nurse that has agreed to fill in - in the event of a communicable disease in the county. After some questions and discussion, Doug Harp moved to approve the contract pending commissioner's approval. Max Franklin seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.

**HIGHWAY**

Zack Smith, Highway Engineer, is present to update the commissioners on the highway department:

- Zack reported the HMA 2023-01 is nearing completion. Pulver's are finishing up 900 E. HMA 2023 -02 will begin next spring. Pulver's also received the bid for this project.
- The next call for HMA projects will be in January of 2024.

- The Asset Management Plan has been submitted to the state and has been certified.
- LPA Project Bridge 136 and Bridge 44 are going out for letting this month in hopes for better bids.
- Right of way work continues on some of the other LPA projects.
- Surveying work is happening on the safety project of 100 N and 50 W
- Zack is planning to submit Bridge 61, Bridge 56 and the Baseline Road in the next round of "Call for Projects".

#### ANNEX

Zack Smith, Project Manager, has the following updates for the New Annex and the Courthouse Renovation:

- The new annex is complete and with the exception of one outstanding invoice the project is in the final stages to close out the project.
- As far as the courthouse renovation, a pre-bid conference was held on September 29<sup>th</sup> with a walk through of the courthouse following for all of the bidders present. With a number of the bidders seemingly interested in bidding, the group has decided to move the bid opening from October 12 to October 19<sup>th</sup>. This will give additional time for bidders to place their bids.
- Zack provided a report concerning the roof and the masonry exterior findings. Zack indicated that some issue can wait 3-5 or 5-10 years. Zack is cataloging these issues for future projects.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the courthouse originally has the expansion of the elevator. It was discovered that a beam is directly above the current elevator and with no plan to finish the fourth floor at this time - the elevator will not be extended to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor at this time.
- Zack is expecting to have the Courthouse Renovation bids as well as the Bridge 136 and Bridge 44 bids to present to the council at their November meeting.

#### ABATEMENT

Melanie Kellogg, EDC, Nick Busche, CEO, Terra Supreme Battery and Bernie the co-founder of the company is present to request an abatement for personal property. The group is requesting a 10-year abatement on \$22,609,604.00 personal property investment. Mr. Busche is telling the group that this is the vision of the 5 co-founder and no one else in the world will be make this battery. He also indicated that although there are no military contracts at this time, there is more than a possibility of this in the future. The plan is to have 65 employees in place by September of 2024 adding 5 more job some time after that. The total employees expected at this time is 70 with a payroll of \$4,494,000.00. Doug Harp moved to approve the personal property abatement. Tom Janes seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

The real estate abatement was also discussed. Mr. Busche had come before the council earlier for a \$1,000,000.00 + abatement for improvement to his facility. Since that time, the ownership on those buildings has changed and he is wanting to increase the amount of the abatement and this comes with the name change. There is more research that will need to be done on this issue before this can be granted.

#### KENDALLVILLE LIBRARY 2024 BUDGET

Mindy Paterson and others from the Kendallville Library were in attendance for the adoption of the Kendallville Library 2024 budget. Mary Wysong moved to approve the budget. Doug Harp seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-0.

#### NOBLE COUNTY 2024 BUDGET

Michelle Mawhorter, Noble County Auditor, was present for the adoption of the 2024 Noble County budget. She indicated that there were not many changes from the requested budget to adopted budget. Motion to approve the Noble County 2024 budget came from Mary Wysong with a second from Max Franklin. Motion carried 7-0.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Stacey Beam came before the commissioners to update them on her department. She gave a history of the department:

- Stacey started in 1990 and at that time there were 2 adult officers 2 juvenile officers, 2 support staff and the Chief Probation officer.
- In 1991 Home detention monitoring started and an office was hired for that.
- Stacey became chief in 2002
- Court Services existed but was a separate unit. In 2007, court services became a part of the probation department.
- The department is now in charge of Community Correction, Drug Court and Veterans court. These are evidence-based courts that encourage offenders to make life style changes along with better choices.
- 2011 – a training program was introduced to the officers which would allow them to carry guns. Stacey reported that there are 10 officers that carry at this time
- 2012 – a federal grant brough risk assessments to the department. This enabled the officers to determine the best course of action or needs of the offender.
- 2019 brought the pre-trial program to the department.
- Currently the department has 24 employees 16 officers 5 support staff and 3 instructors.

TRANSFER PROBATION

Danyel Wagner was present for the request to transfer the following dollars in the Community Corrections funds:

Decrease 8164-39103-769 Education & seminars	\$5472.00
Increase 8164-18519-769 Pattee	\$1344.00
Increase 8164-12600-769 FICA	\$ 409.00
Increase 8164-18100-769 PERF	\$ 791.00
Increase 8164-22501-769 Urinalysis	\$2928.00
Decrease 8179-12600-749 FICA	\$ 803.26
Decrease 8179-39103-749 Education & Seminars	\$1895.00
Decrease 8179-39200-749 Lodging	\$2473.37
Decrease 8179-32301-749 Transportation	\$1500.00
Decrease 8179-24604-749 Incentives	\$1000.00
Decrease 8179-13700-749 overtime	\$2500.00
Increase 8179-18100-749 PERF	\$5670.30
Increase 8179-18509-749 Owen	\$1941.26
Increase 8179-18511-749 Streich	\$1560.00
Increase 8179-22501-749 Urinalysis	\$1000.07
Decrease 8157-11253-726 Wicker	\$11983.35
Decrease 8157-12600-726 FICA	\$ 3294.00
Decrease 8157-18100-726 PERF	\$ 4488.00
Decrease 8157-31500-726 Contracts	\$ 5128.00
Increase 8157-18504-726 Haywood	\$4643.00
Increase 8157-18520-726 Adams	\$4437.08
Increase 8157-11103-726 Furniss	\$ 117.00
Increase 8157-11250-726 Green	\$1016.00
Increase 8157-11102.726 Wagner	\$9552.27
Increase 8157-37100-726 Rents & Leases	\$5128.00

Max Franklin moved to approve the transfers. Trey Forbes seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

CCD CLAIMS

Max Weber, Noble County Sheriff, is asking that the following claims be paid from the CCD Fund

- Equiparts \$266.59
- Equiparts \$497.53
- Town of Albion \$804.70

Total \$1,568.82 was approved with a motion from Doug Harp. Brandon Chordas seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

ADDITIONAL

Michelle Mawhorter, Noble County Auditor, is asking for an additional in the Commissioners budget for Group Insurance. The amount request was \$250,000.00 and was approved with a motion from Mary Wysong and a second from Tom Janes. Motion carried 7-0.

ENGINEERS CONTRACT

The engineer's contract was tabled at the last Council meeting due to some members being absent. It is back on the agenda for today's meeting. Zack Smith, Highway Engineer, along with Gary Leatherman, County Commissioner, were present for this discussion. Zack reviewed the incidents at budget time that led up to the contract request. He had requested an increase over the 5% that was given to most other employees and since his current contract was still in place, the council suggested that he negotiate a new contract with the commissioners. He had done this, the commissioners approved it pending council approval for funding and it brought the contract to today's discussion. Dennis Graft, spoke via phone, to the council telling them of the millions of dollars brought into the county through Zack's work. This being over \$34,000,000.00 for roads and bridges. There are many more projects in the works for completion. Jackie Knafel also spoke about some of the projects that Zack has completed that have brought the county into compliance for not only the highway but in other areas as well. Gary Leatherman spoke as well and is concerned that if Zack were to leave this position "what would be do with 12 LPA projects still on the table and yet to be completed. He also indicated that the Highway department is in very good shape at this time with personnel, and the buildings at the department all completed under Zack's leadership. Several council members also commented on Zack's work and accomplishments but would rather see him complete the current contract and then move forward with a new contract for 2025 and beyond. After a lengthy discussion, Max Franklin moved to approve the contract. Trey Forbes seconded and the vote was taken. Max Franklin, Trey Forbes and George Bennett all voted for the new contract. Mary Wysong, Tom Janes, Brandon Chordas and Doug Harp all voted against. The motion did not pass by a 3-4 decision. Zack thanked the board for their consideration of the contract.

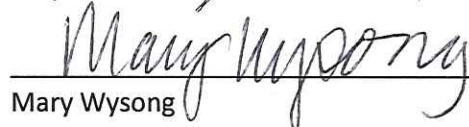
ADJOURNMENT:

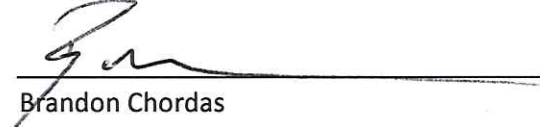
There being no further business before the Noble County Council, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30pm until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council being November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Dated this 6 day of Nov, 2023

  
Trey Forbes

  
Max Franklin

  
Mary Wysong

  
Brandon Chordas

*Tom Janes*

Tom Janes

*George Bennett*

George Bennett

*Doug Harp*

Doug Harp

ATTEST:

*Michelle Mawhorter*

Michelle Mawhorter, Noble County Auditor