

# Randolph County Council

April 2, 2024

The Randolph County Council met for its regular meeting at 8:30 AM in the Commissioners and Council Room of the Courthouse with the following members present: Council President David Lenkensdofer, Tom Chalfant, Mike Stine, Tom Kerns, Todd Holaday, Missy Williams and Beverly Fields. Also present was County Auditor Laura J Martin.

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Council President David Lenkensdofer presided.

Pledge of Allegiance

## **Public Hearing– UG Winchester Biogas, LLC abatement**

Dave said on our agenda is a public hearing of UG Winchester Biogas, LLC. I'm not sure what that's about. We've never been presented here.

Tom Chalfant said that's the Union Go Dairy

Dave said okay.

Dave Mrouzinski said do you want us to come up?

Dave said yes, come on up.

Dave Mrouzinski said we brought some literature today that you can reference. We're going to talk about the process and what we're doing, so we probably should pass that out I guess, if that's alright?

Dave said go right ahead. The normal process is to come to a county council meeting first before the hearing.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay.

Dave said I guess you had to schedule the meeting, because it would be May before we could act on it.

Meeks said usually there's a preliminary resolution that's passed. We don't have a preliminary resolution for you.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay.

Meeks said and at that preliminary resolution, that gets a public hearing set at, usually the next council meeting.

Dave said what we'll do today I think, we'll listen and I would recommend do not make a decision today.

Meeks said we can't if you don't have a resolution.

Dave said but go right ahead.

Dave Mrouzinski said sure. Okay. Well I mean, I'll kick it off. My name is Dave Mrouzinski. I work for IGS Energy. It's a natural gas and electric company out of Columbus, Ohio. Been here at IGS for 15 years and joined today with Mark, who I'll let him introduce himself.

Mark Drabich. I've also been with IGS Energy for about 10 years, and we've been in the compressed natural gas division. If you're familiar with compressed natural gas, is vehicle fuel and we're also representing the business from a biogas standpoint as well, renewable natural gas division of our company.

Dave Mrouzinski so appreciate you guys. I'll take just about five minutes of your time, and then open it for questions. But our company, as a whole, we are a natural gas and electric company. Been in business for 35 years, privately held company. Do business in Ohio and all the states that surround Ohio. About a year, year and a half ago, our company decided that we wanted to get into biogas production. And we partnered with a company called Dairy DC and found several dairy farms throughout the region, Union Go Dairy being one of them, to partner with to build, own and operate digesters on dairy farms. For us, our company is kind of providing the capital leasing the land from the dairy, and taking possession, temporary possession we'll call it, of the manure. So, normally, and this is the process layout diagram that I have here. You know, normally, the manure would go from the cow into the lagoon, and then each year, it's spread on the fields. In our particular process, it still ends in the lagoon, however, we just digest it, we heat it and stir it in the digester first, in order to capture the methane, and bring it to market essentially. So, there's a lot of mega-dairy farms, we'll call it, out there that have done this process before. But we're probably paving the way in the country in terms of doing this on a smaller scale, trying to make it work. And because we're doing it on a smaller scale, the typical method of getting this gas to market is a little bit different. In our case, you can't justify the millions of dollars it takes to run a gas pipeline to the dairy farm. And instead, we'll be compressing the gas on the farm into a trailer, and then once every three to five days, that trailer goes to a centralized injection site that we have just over the border in Ohio, and injects that natural gas onto the pipeline. Then the trailer comes back and that 5-day cycle kind of repeats itself. And so, it's a, walk through the process, a little more details if you guys like or open it up for questions. But from a high level, that's essentially what we're doing. And then the proposal, it's a tax abatement to help us with some of the costs of specifically, a personal property tax, I believe it's called abatement, specifically, because everything that we're putting on site, it's our understanding is considered equipment, not real property. And so that's essentially the proposal, that we've partnered with a company to help us cut through this process.

Mark Drabich said and to clarify the, all the equipment that's going to be on site, it's going to be wholly owned by us and the owner of the dairy, they're not going to own any of the equipment. So, this abatement wouldn't impact them personally at all. This is just going to be helping us to really pencil out to make sure these, this farm would work financially for our model.

Tom Chalfant said you're taking methane and compressing it and injecting it into a natural gas pipeline?

Dave Mrouzinski said that's right.

Tom Chalfant said how does that, how does methane equate to natural gas in BTUs?

Dave Mrouzinski said very, very similar. The main constituent of natural gas is methane. And so, as they, as you pull natural gas out of the ground, it's actually a whole host of hydrocarbons, you know, gasoline, diesel, propane, pentane, hexane, etc. They split out those molecules into, what we think of as natural gas, but the real goal is that natural gas is typically 99, 98% methane, a little bit of propane, a little bit of ethane, etc. And so, the way these digester's process works, without the pressure of the earth, you actually can only create methane. So, it's essentially pure methane after our little on-site refining skid does its work. And then that methane is injected into the regular pipeline. It's about a 1000, 1010 BTU per cubic foot.

Tom Chalfant said could you tell us what this, the value of this methane is?

Dave Mrouzinski said sure. So, there're several components to the value stream. There's the raw commodity, itself, the natural gas. But quite frankly, this business wouldn't work if that was our only source of revenue. Really, what we're participating in is a federal program called a Renewable Fuel Standard, so it's a similar, it's actually part of the same program that the ethanol folks plan, that you know, derive ethanol from corn. It's a very small subset of that program versus how large ethanol production is. But, taking that gas and injecting it onto a pipeline allows us to generate a credit. That credit is then sold in an open market place, and that's ultimately what is really funding the structure of what we're doing here.

Tom Chalfant said but, I mean, can you tell us what that methane is worth when it goes into the pipeline, you know, the total value?

Mark Drabich said oh like per dekatherm?

Tom Chalfant said yeah.

Dave Mrouzinski said yeah, it's a fluctuating market. So, it can be anywhere from \$20.00 a dekatherm to \$50.00 a dekatherm. It really just depends.

Tom Chalfant said and natural gas is 2, 3, \$4.00 a dekatherm?

Mark Drabich said 2 or \$3,00 today.

Tom Chalfant said I guess my point being, that we're in a carbon economy, which is not a real free market economy, would you agree? I mean, like I said, you wouldn't be doing this if there was not money from the government subsidizing it?

Dave Mrouzinski said so, kind of, yes. The money that's subsidizing the program that we're participating in, really the government stood up the program, and then the refineries are the ones who are the obligated parties essentially, to by those credits.

Tom Chalfant said but their motivation to do this, and I've been involved with ethanol, and so, yes, we're talking out of both sides of the mouth, because we're sequestering carbon, we're getting the same benefit, but again, it's pretty much an artificial energy economy. Hopefully, it works, and but the main point, is to remove carbon from our atmosphere, which we think will lower our temperature if that's a good thing. So, I think everybody is starting to figure this out that there are a lot of taxes on energy these days that help create these projects.

Dave Mrouzinski said sure, yeah.

Tom Chalfant said and with this kind of research, hopefully, things will, we can move to just a little cleaner, less hydrocarbon environment.

Mark Drabich said one of the cool things with this process is that the energy currently that is in the lagoons, is just, it's not being used for anything. And so, you know, in a different than like a manufacturing setting where you're creating the energy, the energy is already there. We're actually speeding up the process so that we can harness that energy and then inject it on the pipeline.

Missy said how many employees will you have working out there?

Dave Mrouzinski said sure, yeah. So, direct employees, you know, employed by our company, we have one. It's about a 7-million-dollar investment, and then, you know, ancillary services, you know, so we have pump suppliers that are based in Indiana. Construction, majority of the firms hired we anticipate will be based in Indiana and based in the local region. And then ongoing kind of supporting services. Yes, it's not a hugely, it's a very capital-intensive operation for sure. And then there'll be a couple people probably both, what we hire directly and kind of ancillary services provided.

Todd said is the boiler itself fueled by methane in these?

Dave Mrouzinski so it is, for this location, it's actually going to be fueled by propane. The other benefit of a digester I guess neighbors can enjoy is the smell that typically comes off of the lagoon will be greatly reduced, because that expedited digestion inside a digester, we're actually capturing the smell along with the methane and CO<sub>2</sub> and other stuff coming off the digester. And then, as that process splits out the methane, we take everything else that was in the gas stream and send it to a flare, which burns off that smell essentially, and so there's kind of a nice bi-product of the process as well for the neighbors.

Missy said how long have you been in this business?

Dave Mrouzinski said sure, so we're, we've been in business for over 10 years, which is really the second page, and part of this one. What's new to our company is the digester side specifically, but we've got a really good team of engineers and folks that educate us and help us get our feet wet.

Missy said and what are your credentials?

Mark Drabich said Dave is one of the smartest people I've ever met. So, his credential, honestly, is figuring anything else out. Myself, I'm more on the business side of things. And so, from my standpoint, on the compressed natural gas side, and on the bottled gas side, it's finding the partners for the agreements of the gas and the renewable attributes of it. And then also, from a business standpoint of finding tax credits or anything like that, and the analysis of how much our up time is and what are costs associated with that.

Dave Mrouzinski said and then for me, a business degree, but engineering mind, hold multiple patents on gas processes, been in operations the majority of my career for our company. And then also, we have several folks that have been very helpful that are represented here as part of a company. We have a PD, licensed engineer as part of our team, who has been, actually spent a majority of his career in the wastewater space after he got out of the military. And so, we're still putting the right people on the bus and we already have a really good start. But transparently, you know, we don't have an operational digester today. We've got three projects that are currently under construction. Our one that, you know, should open here in about a month or two, is in Sydney, Ohio. It's probably 90, 95% complete, and that'll be our first project. If we're able to move forward with this particular project, it's 5<sup>th</sup> in line, I think, for our buildout. So, we'll have the benefit of it not being the first one, which hopefully, it'll, our construction schedules will go faster. And then also, highlight for our business models, it's really important that every site is the same. So, same equipment. Hopefully, we're you know, sticking with the same or similar kind of construction, contractors and vendors and same pumps and all that kind of stuff.

Missy said do you foresee any other dairy farms in the area or nearby that you're going to try to?

Dave Mrouzinski said sure, yeah. So, we actually have a contract with 6 in Indiana right now. None, no additional ones yet in this particular county, but the injection site where all this gas is going to is in a small town in Convoy, Ohio near Van Wert just over the border in Ohio. And for our business model, really, if you picture where Van Wert is and you draw a 100-mile radius around that, that's really going to be our target market for this. Trucking, we want to truck as little as possible, which is why our model in particular, we're generating, we're keeping the manure on site. There are other folks doing similar models to us, but they're trucking manure at the small farms, so they're doing said 10 truckloads of manure a day to a centralized much larger digester, and you know, from our, we think we've got a good model where we keep the manure on site, reduce truck traffic a lot, and then just truck the natural gas, but that would be kind of another model that you may be hearing about in the future we're seeing.

Missy said so how many semis do you think will be pulling in and out of there in a week?

Dave Mrouzinski said one to two a week. Every three to five days depending on temperatures and how fast the biogas is being produced.

Tom Chalfant said do you have any models where you add food waste to the mix?

Dave Mrouzinski said some people are doing that. We do not. Yeah, we're actually quite intentionally focusing and staying just on dairy manure and keeping the manure on site.

Tom Chalfant said a whole different set of yeast and enzymes and, yeah.

Dave Mrouzinski said a whole different ball game. Yeah, if you'd start getting into food waste, and then your digester starts to change and you can have upsets depending on how fast you're adding different foods in, so.

Mark Drabich said and think of these as a giant stomach. So, if you're introducing a whole bunch of different stuff to that stomach, you can get an upset stomach, unless you know how to treat it.

Dave Mrouzinski said right. And the bacteria that actually do the breakdown, we're not adding it. It comes from the cow's stomach. And so, all we're trying to do is replicate that stomach environment as best we can, so we keep it at a 100 degrees Fahrenheit, you gently stir it, and the micros kind of do their thing and create that gas.

Todd said and the manure that ends up in the lagoon, when it's spread out on the field, it sounds obvious, but it also has less methane, so the spreading of it is less nauseous as well?

Dave Mrouzinski said that's right. And according to all the experts we've talked to, I've yet to personally witness this, but it smells significantly less they're saying because of that accelerated digestion. So, the, when we put, when it goes into the lagoon after a process, it's probably 90% digested. It's not a 100% digested. We aren't able to like capture every, you know, little piece of energy in there, but it's significantly reduced. And it doesn't really change the farmer's process at all. I mean, everything they do for their farm, spreading it on their fields, the value of the fertilizer, the value that you know, that the manure then adds to the crops, all the same. So, our intent is to be very light touch to the farm. You know, we're obviously long-term partners here for each of these farms, and we want to be really good partners with them. And then we also have a fairly small footprint, so, maybe an acre and a half, is about the total footprint that this will take up, typically on the corner of the dairy where all the manure is currently collected today.

Todd said then the local farmer will have some more income then, as a result of this?

Dave Mrouzinski said exactly, yeah. Yeah, I think that you know, when you want to, the jobs are certain great, but we're not a big employer, right, when we're talking really about one direct job you know, instead of two or three indirect. But, certainly the farmer now will be more

resilient because this is a costless opportunity for revenue stream for him. And so, that's definitely a benefit, and then that leads to you know, hopefully, him buying newer tractors and investing in his dairy farm as well.

Dave said so, will the dairy farm be run by methane?

Dave Mrouzinski no.

Dave said they're not. They are just extracting everything and taking and injecting into a pipeline?

Tom Chalfant said well he can buy LP a lot cheaper.

Dave Mrouzinski said yes. It's an interesting business model, because basically, the biogas only has value when it's nominated for transportation, so that gas has to ultimately make its way into a compressed natural gas vehicle somewhere in the country. And that's what drives the value. So, as silly as it is, you know for example that we have to use propane instead of methane to heat our boiler, and it's not a ton of propane that we're using, right, relative to have much we're producing, but it still makes economic sense to essentially truck a 100% of that gas to get it into the pipeline.

Tom Kerns said does this model work on the hog buildings or anything like that? Are you looking into that sector?

Dave Mrouzinski said it can. You know, the fun fact that I just find fascinating about this is 5 dairy cows produce enough methane in a year from their manure to heat your home. That's it. And so there really is a lot of methane, a lot of energy to be captured as part of this process. With hogs, the ratio is more like 20 or 30 to equal a house, and so you just need a lot more hogs in a concentrated area for this to work. And so right now, our company is very, very much myopically focused on dairy, because we think there's a lot of ability to apply this business model smaller farms, relative, I mean this is still up on 14 hundred farms I think, but to apply this business model to this size farm first.

Tom Kerns said how does it effect, and this is kind of outside of it, the fertilizer factor I guess, of the manure you're putting on the farm afterwards, compared before you digest and after you digest?

Dave Mrouzinski said yeah, I'm told it's a little bit better, but I wouldn't say it's like significantly better.

Tom Kerns said so, it increases the value of the manure as a fertilizer?

Dave Mrouzinski said slightly, yes.

Dave said any other questions? Meeks, what are our next steps?

Meeks said well, we need a preliminary resolution to grant an economic revitalization area and a tax abatement. Sounds like you guys sent a declaratory resolution.

Dave Mrouzinski said yes.

Meeks said and that's for the ERA, economic revitalization area.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay.

Meeks said so, we need the, a preliminary resolution for an ERA and a tax abatement. Now that can be two separate resolutions or all in one. Then we would need the confirmatory resolutions for both the ERA and the tax abatement. So, generally, what we do, and I talked to, I didn't realize there was a public hearing today, but usually, what we do is do the preliminary resolution, they pass it. In that preliminary resolution, it sets a date for a public hearing.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay.

Meeks said and then, and which is usually the next meeting, then you guys have your public hearing. Then they either pass it or not pass it. What's not in that is, I'm assuming you're asking for the traditional tax abatement. I did not see that in the declaratory resolution, traditional. You need to let us know what you're asking for.

Dave Mrouzinski said yep.

Meeks said the traditional tax abatement would be 100% the first year, 90, 80, 70, 60.

Dave Mrouzinski said yes, I believe that's what that is.

Tom Chalfant said so that's a 10-year abatement, rather than a 20-year abatement?

Meeks said it's usually 10. We've only done 10s. I'm not sure we've ever done 20. I know the city of Winchester have done 3s and 5 years.

Tom Chalfant said I think Cardinal, wasn't Cardinal 20 years?

Meeks said Cardinal was a tif. It's a 100% that goes into that district. They still pay their tax. So, what you're asking for, some of them are 3 years, 5 years, I don't know, with the property tax caps as they are, you'd have to get your accountants to tell you the value.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay.

Meeks said at year 9, I've seen them near 7, it doesn't matter anymore, you know, you going to have to still be paying so, have to ask the accountant.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay.



Meeks said so, I can, you can send it to me and I can tell you if it looks fine, what you need.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay. We can do that.

Meeks said so, probably have at the next meeting, a preliminary resolution. Then at the next meeting after that, just have the confirmatory one.

Dave said so we're looking at June for the final?

Meeks said that's usually, it's a 3-month process. Usually, you come in say this is what we want to do and if they say, so, you're on the right time frame. I don't want to act like you're, at all. Usually, you come in, this is what we want, this what our proposal is. Okay, well get us a preliminary resolution. Then you bring it in.

Dave Mrouzinski said yep.

Meeks said and then you do the confirmatory.

Dave Mrouzinski said so, for the next meeting, we only need a preliminary resolution?

Meeks said preliminary for the ERA and the tax abatement. And again, when I prepared them, they're usually two different documents. You can have them one, they can be in the same document.

Dave Mrouzinski said okay. Alright, sounds good. Thanks for your time.

Mark Drabich said thank you.

Dave said thank you for coming in.

Missy said do you have a business card?

Dave said now I need a motion to close this public hearing.

Tom Chalfant made a motion to close the public hearing. Mike Stine seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

### **Commissioner's update**

Gary Friend said morning everybody. Alright, well, several things to go over to let council know about is we promoted Jay Long to highway superintendent, and he'll be, April the 12<sup>th</sup> is Mike's last day. And we promoted Brad Mullen to the EMS director yesterday.

Bev said who is the highway, Jay Long?

Gary Friend said Jay Long. He's the assistant. He's the current assistant.

Bev said okay.

Gary Friend said alright. And then, another bit of business that will be coming up for you is Debra Johnting is here from the APC and the APC gave a favorable recommendation as has the commissioners to the council to put another person in that office. And there's already been a little bit of discussion on that, so that would be, I'm sure deliberated today. Chris Shaneyfelt came in and you probably have on yours, an application for a grant from the Lilly Foundation that's related to the tornado that we had. Duane Petry, his last action before he retired is got a change order approved for the ambulance that was ordered 7, 8 months ago, I think. And when we were discussing that ambulance, we knew that there could be change orders on the chassis coming, but we had to get it in line in order to get it.

Tom Chalfant said do you know what the actual cost is going to be on that?

Gary Friend said about \$218,000 and some change after that.

Tom Chalfant said that won't be the total cost of the ambulance will it?

Gary Friend said no, we'll have to build it out a little bit, yeah. And Brad is here for any detailed questions on that. The Health Department was in and requested the old highway office up in the RCCFO building for a place to do some mental health counselling. There's a lot of that going on.

Missy said Gary, I've got a question on that.

Gary Friend said yep?

Missy said do we have any paperwork from Ball State on who's going to be here, what hours they're going to be here, if they come, are they going to do evenings?

Gary Friend said I do not know. That would be the Health Department. We just approved the use of the location.

Meeks said if they came to the city, I don't think there's any details yet.

Mayor McCoy said I think they're about two weeks out from my understanding, but I can't confirm that. But once I know more, I'll let you know.

Missy said because I appreciate the gal who came in but, the head of the Health Department didn't come in and ask, so is there coordination in the Health Department that yeah, we're all in favor of this?

Gary Friend said my understanding there is. Tammy Pruitt came in for the Health Department. She'll be the one to kind of coordinate that. But no, I didn't personally hear from Dr. Sowinski down through there. So, that's a good question, I just asked it myself.

Tom Chalfant said I assume we would have no liability?

Gary Friend said no, they signed a no liability with us. There's no charge from the county to do this either. So, yeah, that part was taken care of, the no liabilities.

Laura said they're going to be in the basement. She asked for the highway office.

Gary Friend said oh, okay. Well thank you. Anyway, we're going to let them do mental health out there at the RCCFO.

Missy said I'm in favor of that. If it's after hours, who is going to supervise and make sure it's locked up and I know?

Gary Friend said yeah, Jake's not unaware. He had mentioned it.

Missy said yeah, okay.

Gary Friend said Randolph County Promise was in. There's a large change going on there. We're taking, the county is taking back control of it at Community Foundation. It is a little more money. We approved a 5-year plan for them. It's \$25,000.00 a year for 5 years. It's going to expand from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grades to be put in there. We will take care of it all because, I don't understand totally, everything that was going awry with it, making it difficult, but I believe them that it was being very difficult to manage through several layers of governmental operations.

Tom Chalfant said so, that's still run by volunteers or will that?

Gary Friend said no, there'll be, some of that money will be for administrative. There will be administrative help overseeing it all, and then there's actual liaisons who will be paid \$500.00 a year in each one of the schools and maybe more than one for administrative. Watch Communication was in with a proposal. The commissioners didn't take any action on it. The town of Losantville was in. They are here to explain in detail what it is. But long story short, for the commissioners, we have decided, we got the money back that we loaned to them, that we would grant them \$275,000.00 to help hook the people of the city on to it because they're going to be hit basically, with a double burden, a \$100.00 a month for a utility bill they're not used to. And then the hookup from wherever the drop is for it. So, the average of that was about 133 clients down there at about \$2,000.00 each to get them all hooked up. And then I think it's a fair ask and a fair thing that we do. It's important that they get this all taken care of, get everybody on.

Tom Chalfant said this is, a 133 clients in Losantville?

Gary Friend said uh huh.

Tom Chalfant said that's a lot.

Gary Friend said well, there are some that are between Losantville and Modoc that are on the direct line. They're here to ask, the commissioners approved it to let that money, once we got the money back into the Renewal Energy funding, that we voted to use that same fund in order to fund this grant. There's an additional appropriation coming for the council as Chris Peacock came in and gave us a proposal to get the drainage at the farm grounds behind the 4-H grounds. It's about 50 acres and it's around \$51,000.00. I don't have the exact number down here.

Tom Chalfant said do you know if they'll drain the entire property.

Gary Friend said all but one acre. The one acre where they're going to be putting a new septic system in for the buildout that's going there.

Tom Chalfant said I guess if 4-H wants to expand their parking or something, they hopefully wouldn't interfere with the systematic drainage that's already there.

Gary Friend said right, yeah. Because there had been some talk, I mean, I was, talked more about it than anybody, that if we were going to carve out one acre to the back, then we should extend it all the way across and let it square off and let them expand a little bit. That part of it really never got a lot of discussion. As far as putting in the septic system, it has got a lot of discussion. And I don't see anybody that's not going to approve doing that sometime. So, I think I'll mention to them the possibility of doing the first lateral back enough if that were to happen, we wouldn't do it. Also, in the same discussion, not this year, but maybe into the fall of next year, is the 7 acres out by the airport. Ben Brumfield is renting that, when he's going to do a drainage project that we'd then get that taken care of at that time. And then Brad Dilger was in from EDPR for a new road study of the Riverstart 5 I think it is, which is over around Saratoga. Riverstart 3, which is around the Randolph County Farms, I toured those roads yesterday. They're preparing in the next couple of weeks to get those roads re-developed. I'd asked the highway department to get out and to red paint off exactly what we think needs fixed on the berms so we don't end up putting, it's a double layer chip and seal that we're looking at. There is a possibility they would rather just come in and hot mix it, which is fine with me, but the chip and seal road is what existed out there, and that's what we'll go back. But we want to make sure they don't chip and seal over busted down berms.

Tom Chalfant said do you know if the state is going to reimburse us for Base Road, the damage was done before the state closing that bridge?

Gary Friend said I don't, Tom. And I hope they do. I mean it took a while before they reimbursed us on the, what was it 900. It was quite a while, but they did. I don't know. We have the same problem too, down off of 36. Anything I can answer for you guys? That's the bulk of the commissioners' meeting yesterday.

Meeks said forgot the emergency declaration.

Gary Friend said you know, you're right. We had an emergency declaration, thank you, Meeks, to allow the building on the footprint of the properties that were destroyed in the tornado. That declaration last for a year from the tornado. It's mainly looking at the sides. If the people want

to add on and they're allowed to add on by the size of their property, that would go to the standard variances and setbacks. But as far as the side setbacks, which is really where the problems are at, they got one year to get things going to rebuild on it. And also, the commissioners approved it's 90 days on the burning.

Meeks said so, on the side setback, if you put your house, rebuild your house on the same footprint, you're okay.

Gary Friend said right.

Meeks said on the rear setbacks, you will be okay as long as the setbacks are fine.

Gary Friend said right.

Meeks said if you want to expand your house, then you're going to have to get a variance. We can't waive any of the fire codes.

Gary Friend said right.

Meeks said or the any of the building codes.

Gary Friend said right.

Meeks said that's just, we can't do it.

Gary Friend said right.

Meeks said the permits, you still have to get a permit. We are just waiving the fee for that permit, but we still want everybody to get a permit. The other one is IDEM, we are not allowed to put the yard waste to Best Way. We're under an IDEM rule for that. But, if you are in a natural disaster which was declared by the governor and everyone else, we are now allowed to take yard waste. Best Way can accept yard waste for the next 90 days. I don't know if that can be extended or not. We'll see if we need to in 90 days. Talking about the burning, I still think you're not supposed, pretty sure IDEM doesn't want you to burn anything.

Gary Friend said no, they don't.

Tom Chalfant said now the one-year grace period, is that to finish, complete the structure or to start it?

Meeks said just the permit. That's just the permit.

Tom Chalfant said if you started but not complete, you're okay?

Meeks said well I think if you have a permit in process. I think we're probably, we had to put a date in there. I think we're going to assess it ten months from now to see where people are at, if we need to extend it for another. We just didn't want that to be open ended.

Gary Friend said we were asked if that restricted going up another level, and it does not, as long as they followed the unified building ordinance.

Meeks said you can put, yeah, you can put a second floor on your house as long as it's on the same footprint. You know, we don't care. I guess you can't put four stories.

Gary Friend said no, you can't put four on it.

Meeks said yeah, you can't put four on it. It can be three, but four, I'm not sure.

Gary Friend said I think it can be three. I think you can do two and a loft, I'm pretty sure. But, I would ask Randy. And both of those ordinances or not ordinances, resolutions, 2024-04 and 05. Thank you, Meeks.

Meeks said yeah, it was important.

Gary Friend said it is important and I had it on my mind sitting back there, but I didn't write it down. Should always write it down. Anybody have anything?

Dave said anything else for Gary? Thanks for coming in, Gary.

Gary Friend said thank you.

### **Chris Shaneyfelt – Grant application**

Dave said Chris Shaneyfelt. I don't see him here. Is there anybody here to represent him?

Art Moystner said I would share with you that he's not going to be able to make it over today due to staffing issue and dispatch.

Dave said okay. Thanks sheriff. Okay, what we have is a grant application approval. Amount requested \$5,000. No county match.

Todd said the way I read it is it was offered by the Ball Foundation just for relief. It was \$5,000.00 one time.

Dave said I'd entertain a motion on it, \$5,000.00 grant from Ball Foundation.

Todd made motion to approve. Mike seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

### **Jessica Olson – Hwy Department update**

Jessica Olson said we're just here to give an update. Any questions that anyone has. I appreciate that I've given everybody a huge amount of data. We did meet with the public assistance. As

we are still, I've only got numbers up to the 22<sup>nd</sup>, but that whole last week, we were still hauling debris, taking things to the landfill. Shanda, over at solid waste is being kind enough to go through the individual tickets because there were so many people dumping, us, Wayne County, Cobalt, Culys. So, she's going to take the time to go through those individual tickets so we can get firm numbers on that. I did want to give everybody the information on Wayne County. We are very grateful for their help. I've spoken with their supervisor. They do not want reimbursement. That was agreed to be an in-kind thing. However, I did talk to the commissioners yesterday and I would like to be able to pay their dump fees, you know, at the landfill. I think that is the least we can do. So, I'm going to get, Shanda is going to give me Randolph County numbers and Wayne County numbers, and I'd like to be able to pay those. Signage, so, we've got an individual, Doug Hoover, who has been managing all the sign damage. So, he has obviously an extensive list. He has vendors that he works with on signage, so we're in the midst of trying to get all that paid for. We are still working on labor hours for last week. I think at this moment in time, they're not hauling, but we have situations where there's been an area cleared and then people are still having to bring things out of the fields, you know, and stuff like that. So, we may have to go back. So, that's where we're at. Working on FEMA rates for the equipment. So, on ours, so the highway has several different pieces of equipment that qualify for FEMA rates. Those FEMA rates are, the fuel cost is included in the FEMA rate. So, even though I was giving you fuel rates, or fuel costs, when we go and actually turn this in, according to these folks, the fuel is already calculated into that rate. And I hope to have that by the end of next week.

Dave said so currently then, we have about \$50,000.00 total in equipment and labor?

Jessica Olson said for Wayne, yes. So, ours is up to the 22<sup>nd</sup>, cost is almost \$38,000, fuel is \$10,500. We're waiting on totals on landfill.

Dave said that solid waste yesterday, Gary, make sure I'm getting things right here, we have decided to probably take the landfill fees and pay from there?

Gary Friend said correct, all the landfill fees up to yesterday, that is related to the tornado and our, like the county's, anybody that was helping Randolph County, anybody that was helping Winchester, Winchester, the only thing that we put a stop on if we can prove is a contractor already being paid. Otherwise, that's different all landfill fees on the tornado will be covered by solid waste. And we made the cut off yesterday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. So, there might be some trailing. The one thing Jessica, the question was asked and nobody really knew, how much landfill do you know is coming out of Wayne County in their landfill, how much was a cost?

Jessica Olson said they're probably at about.

Gary Friend said Wayne and Randolph County both, landfills?

Jessica Olson said oh, Wayne and Randolph?

Gary Friend said Randolph, I mean, we've got the numbers on Randolph.

Jessica Olson said Wayne is probably about \$7,500.

Gary Friend said yeah, we said somewhere between there an \$13,000 I think we thought, the thought was.

Dave said and we're also hoping that Bestway will discount that double figure.

Tom Chalfant said have they been asked?

Gary Friend said yeah, there's discussion on. They've actually made the statement to Shanda, this is the customer cost, but there's so much volume that there will be a volume discount probably on the whole thing. We're thinking we're in the \$75,000.00 range, total clean up disposal.

Dave said right, yeah, right around \$75,000.

Jessica Olson said yeah.

Gary Friend said so, I called the mayor yesterday, let him know. Mike Haffner, I called him too. I didn't know he was going to be off today, to let him know. It was going to be covered.

Jessica Olson said I knew Shanda was going to the board with that in regards to the payment, but I haven't heard, I haven't talked back with her yet.

Tom Chalfant said is the \$75,000, that's the total tipping fees? That's not just the county portion?

Dave said that's the dumping fees.

Tom Chalfant said dumping fees, yeah.

Gary Friend said and to make it easy too, instead of trying to take the tipping fees out and make it easy, that will come back around to solid waste. Solid waste will pay the entire bill, minus the discounts for the volume. And then whatever tipping fees we would collect that comes back into the county will just be a natural collection. Is that how you understood it, Dave?

Dave said just the natural process, yes.

Gary Friend said and the board was all on board with it. And I don't even think we waited on Shanda to bring it up. I think we just passed it

Jessica Olson said okay.

Dave said anything else, Jessica?

Jessica Olson said that is it for right now.



Dave said anybody have any questions for Jessica while she is here?

Missy said you know, I talked to you a little bit earlier, if Richmond would at least, say those are, even if they are getting paid, if they said those are volunteer hours, because we're not reimbursing them, they say it's perfectly legitimate to do that, so we need them to turn in their volunteer hours.

Jessica Olson said yeah. That, we, I cannot turn it in under the highway. They would have to do that.

Missy said it would help us, help the state, is the state 12.4, right Bob, right Mayor?

Mayor McCoy said it's a big number, but, I mean that's totally their call. I mean we can't force them, I mean, I heard the conversation yesterday, and they just said no, in kind, and they were pretty much said that's it.

Missy said they'd just give us the hours on it though. Don't pay them, just give me, just tell her how many hours.

Mayor McCoy said I guess that would be a discussion between the highway department and them. You're right, it would help.

Jessica Olson said it would. I did speak with them. They have been through some FEMA paperwork in the past and they so don't want to do that again. So, it's a lot of documentation. So, if anybody else wants to reach out to them, I spoke with the supervisor there, and he just does not want to do that.

Dave said okay. Thanks for coming in.

Jessica Olson said thank you very much.

Missy said you've done a great job and your whole team out there.

Jessica Olson said thank you. They've been a, they've really pulled together. It's been very nice.

**Debra Johnting – Additional staff**

Debra Johnting said first of all, just add my two cents in the biogas, they have already been through a hearing and they are M2 now out there. The neighbors have been notified and it has been M2 for about a year and a half. And the maximum height of a building is 35 feet, if I remember right. I think that would only allow probably three, three stories. So, I'm not sure what all you'd like to know from me.

Dave said this your additional staff request?

Debra Johnting said yes. For a full-time person, I can pass out, if you're interested, I've got my job description and the person, assistant's job description if you want. And a couple things have driven this from DNR, Randolph County is in the NFIP, a national flood insurance program. That means that one benefit of the assessment property provides property owners with the information about the requirement to bring buildings into compliance before they go towards construction. They're watching that much more closely than they have before. Senate Bill 242, flood plain mapping says that after June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the permit applicant is allowed to elect the flood plain administrator, will use the best available data, so the FEMA maps are still in place. DNR has an additional set of maps. So, we're watching that.

Tom Chalfant said who's going to win that? I mean, is there any idea how that's going to play out because the DNR, that's going to impact a lot of land use.

Debra Johnting said it's already impacting building. We're not allowed to let anyone build traditionally in the flood hazard area. Flood gates, you see the houses down in the south that have the garage underneath so that there's nothing of value below 8, 10, 12 feet. And after June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, an individual may not serve as flood plain administrator of a county, or municipality unless the individual has successfully completed the certified flood plain manager program of the association of the flood plain state managers. So, since I started 9 years ago, our office has started taking over looking looking over the surveys. Now Randy has ADA compliance and now we're working on flood plain mapping. In addition to, I made myself a list so I wouldn't forget, so, the candidate would need management skills, engineering background, GIS background. We work with land usage, land laws, zoning codes, local ordinance, preservation of documents, building knowledge, survey approval, phone conflict and complaints resolution, typing, filing, keeping track of records and a strict timeline focus for hearing management. We do, as you know the area planning meetings and the board of zoning of appeals meetings and anyone on the board will tell you I don't think we skipped a meeting for about two or three years. It's just pretty much meeting every month. In doing this job, the one thing that's become clear is that there's little of value a person has beyond their land and their home. When they come in, they don't know what they're doing, they're not sure what they need to do first, but one thing, I asked a group of high schoolers that came over, do you think that you should be able to do anything you want to do on your own property? And everyone raised their hand. Do you think that your neighbor should have the same courtesy and slowly the hands went down? So, we're busier than we've ever been. Now, we have the tornado issues to deal with. I had a call on Saturday morning from DNR wanting to know if we had been out and assessed any properties that might be in the flood plain. And you say well it wasn't a flood, it was a tornado. However, it does affect that property if a house in the flood hazard area was destroyed, they could not build back traditionally the way they were before. We're talking flood gates, adding block to the foundation, whatever, however far they're in the flood plain.

Tom Chalfant said and this is the county that's the highest elevation.

Debra Johnting said DNR and FEMA both have seminars, it was every three or four months, now it's every month.

Dave said you wouldn't dare go out today and do a flood plain.

Debra Johnting said if the county floods today, I may quit. Tornado, flood, you know, what's next? And I have had part-time assistants. The first one left while I was on vacation, and never came back. Apparently, she didn't want the job. And the second one has; the 28 hours has only really been about 12 to 15.

Missy said why is that if it's 28 and you have work for somebody to do, why isn't she there?

Debra Johnting said it's a long story.

Missy said okay.

Debra Johnting said and I'd like to fix that. So, this just came up kind of abruptly for me. I was in the middle of all the hearings and so, I apologize for not being more prepared.

Dave said are you requesting going from a part-time to a full-time, is that to suffice?

Debra Johnting said well the question on the table was, do I keep a part-time and ask for a full-time? I haven't had a part-time person that has worked 28 hours. So, I, at this time, it's hard to visualize if there's enough work for another person and a part-time person. I'm not sure how to answer that.

Tom Kerns said I was going to say I think Dave, we leave money in the part-time line if we go with the full-time too, because of all the extra stuff going on right now, with the tornado.

Dave said I don't have a problem. I just don't understand what their request is.

Debra Johnting said we actually haven't drawn a great deal from that the last, since they took over. It hasn't worked out very well. Honestly, the person who wants to come in and work a few hours part-time and wants to take over when I retire, which that wing of the building is getting older and we're all like, I'm leaving when you leave, and I don't want that to happen. I don't want, I don't want to leave without someone that's really solid in all of this. And it's going to take some time because they've added things. I've had 9 years to figure it out and absorb. I started in the building commission and then went to area planning under Randy and now he wanted to divide that, and since then, we've had a lot more things added onto this. So, I'm learning, and I'd like to hire someone who would like to take over my job.

Tom Kerns said I think with what that job entails with all the detailed, with everything she's doing there, she needs a full-time person just to, because part-time is just filling hours to do paperwork, compared to learning what the job is and everything else that, I think it makes a lot of sense to have another full-time person in that office.

Dave said okay. On the full-time person, what are you recommending pay wise?

Debra Johnting said I have no idea. I haven't even had a chance to look at that. I honestly can't tell you what I make right now. My ideal plan would be to find someone who is skilled in a lot

of these areas that would like to take over and I would switch with them. And changing pay would be fine. That's not an issue for me. So, that I could be there to assist them as they, you know, take over, and then at some point, you'd only be hiring an assistant and not a director. I'd say right now, I'd like to assume that this person is planning on moving over and taking the director position. I could have retired a year ago, and I will, would like to retire at the end of next year. I'm close to ten years, so I might as well do that, and I'd like to have someone have the time that I've had to learn all of this.

Dave said okay. What's the council's recommendation then? I think one, we can determine the full-time or part-time. I think it's pretty well been discussed that the full-time.

Debra Johnting said and I can, would be happy to come back with more salary information. We just haven't had a chance to look at that.

Dave said I think that would be very helpful to this group. And that way, we could look at numbers on other areas that would be close to that position. So, I'm going to ask for a recommendation for today at least, for a full-time person for Debra's office.

Todd said do we need to title this position? Give a recommendation for.

Dave said it'll have to have some sort of job description type.

Todd said when we did the county assessor's assistant, what did we call that role?

Laura said chief deputy.

Todd said can we follow that same pattern? Does that make sense?

Dave said that's under elected official.

Dave said we could go ahead and approve. Do you not, do you want to wait until we get more information?

Bev said I'd prefer to know what we're talking about financially.

Dave said okay. We could hold off today, but I'm definitely in favor of a full-time person. So, Debra, if you could for us, to get a job description and a sort of a salary-type position, pay-wise. We'll go from there. We're going to table it until May on the final decision.

Debra Johnting said okay. Another situation that we commonly have because Randy is out on inspections, we don't count him out, but we can't count on him all the time to be there. And the building commission secretary is part-time. So, 7 hours a week of my time is potentially doing building commission things. So, that's another thing we, there're four of us in there but, Randy helps when he's there, but he's not always there. And so, Bev and I tag team. We met in the parking lot today. She was coming as I was leaving, so that the office isn't closed. That's kind of another support for that.

Dave said we'll let you guys work that out, out there.

Tom Chalfant said is there any plan in place or anything when you're talking about DNR and the FEMA, to know the difference between their flood plain descriptions, in incorporated areas, or unincorporated? How do we know, that there's going to be a lot of towns that have a lot of flood plains that's not currently flood plain.

Debra Johnting said no. FEMA requires the insurance if you're in FEMA. And we have a definite mapped area for them. A few years ago, kind of stumbled on, we found out the DNR had put in their best available. And as you know, the two of them are kind of jockeying for whether they're going to accept that or not. I thought, from some of the things that I'd gone to, that they would have accepted it by now. FEMA's map was drawn kind of with a broad brush, they decided. And DNR came in and said we want to do it. We want to know what the area planning directors say, okay, this place never floods, this floods, you've got that wrong. In the meantime, FEMA is doing training on encouraging everyone to have insurance. They're saying 50% of the insurance claims they get are not even in the flood plain. Part of that is the urban sprawl around the bigger towns, but it's happening here, as well, because we're continuing to build. And DNR has said make a law that we cannot, any building that we do in DNR's best available, DNR actually sued Wayne County for allowing two homes to be built in their best available flood hazard area. They let the building stand. I'm not sure exactly what all the legal result was.

Tom Chalfant said it took a state legislature, yeah.

Debra Johnting said Wayne County wasn't notified and they didn't know that it even existed, but that didn't let them off the hook. So, we can't, we stop it. They come in. A lot of them don't even know that they're in it. We get them built somewhere else. But, now only are we dealing with that, with the folks that come in, but they're constantly wanting us to do more and more training. So, that takes me out of the office or away from customers and I honestly don't know where it's going to end, but I have seen in the last two years, DNR getting more staff, more vocal, more power, I guess you'd say, getting stronger, it's kind of seeping up here from the coast. It's like, of course, they're not going to let someone build right on the edge of the ocean. Well, they're not going to let somebody in Indiana build in, on the, you know, right next to a ditch that's going to flood. So, they're trying to make it zero damages is what they're going for.

Tom Chalfant said well, but yeah, the federal, state government keep pushing more and more responsibility, take away our power and give us more overhead. And that's the EPA and the Waters of the U.S. It's, but yeah, in the end, the county got control, it's getting worse and worse.

Debra Johnting said and because we're a small county, we've, and other small counties have gotten away with, you know, we're small, there's only a couple of people in our office, we can't do this, that's why they passed the Senate bill, so that we have to do it. And a year ago, I was told anyone in the flood hazard area that I should already have them identified, their information printed from the assessor's report so that the day of a hazard, a flood, a tornado, a fire, I have

those papers in place, and I have to go identify to see if it's over 50% damage, then it has to be built up to rebuild. Haven't got that done yet. So, but they called me to see if I was prepared on Saturday after the tornado. So, they're, they mean business.

Tom Chalfant said and you can't ignore them.

Debra Johnting said huh uh, not anymore. Now, the first training that I was offered was in Baltimore for a week. It was free except for like a meal ticket. But people are kind of balking at that and saying you know, this, the region that we're in is Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, why can't we have something closer. So, they're working on on-line training and maybe in-person training in Ft. Wayne or someplace closer. So, I'm not going to do that yet. I'm doing their monthly training and I'm waiting to see what they come up with because they made that and they weren't prepared. All that takes a lot of time and we also do permits and complaints. I will come back with a description and salary.

Dave said that would be great. Thank you.

**Brian Hill, Carol Weaver and Greg Beumer, Town of Losantville – Sewage Connection Funding**

Greg Beumer said members of the council, good morning. We have with us, Brian Hill, who is president of the Losantville town council, and also Carol Weaver, who is the clerk treasurer. As Commissioner Friend mentioned earlier, we're here this morning to get your approval along with approval we received yesterday from the commissioners for a \$275,000.00 grant that will help local residents, elderly, low income, etc., pay for the connection from the new sewer line collection system that will be put in this year in Losantville to their private residence. A quick update on the project, and then we can help answer any questions that you have, last Thursday, both the town of Modoc and Losantville closed on all of the grant funding and all the loan financing for both projects. The total cost of the Losantville project is \$6,517,561.00. And the Modoc project is very close to that number, very similar. So, there's a lot of investment being made in that area. The Losantville project is being done by a local contractor, Indiana Earth Works, Scott Fisher. He was the low bidder. And we're glad to see that money stay local. So, with that, Brian or Carol, do you have anything that you would like to add?

Carol Weaver said I just want to add that you know, we're pretty comfortable with Scott doing the project because he's very, he knows our water lines, he knows the area, I believe that's going to same time and effort. We're ready, we had our pre-construction meeting last Thursday, that meeting went well. Everyone was there. And we're ready to start as soon as the weather permits. We're hoping within a couple of weeks. And Scott would like to be done, November, December, because January and February months don't allow too much effort in finishing up the finished work. But we're hoping to start immediately and get things moving and we're very encouraged for our community. We do have a lot of low-income families in our area. But this project is going to increase the value of every home, every property, and most of our properties are homeowner property. We have very few rental properties in our community. So, we're just very pleased with the progress and how it's going.

Brian Hill said so, I told the commissioners it was around 10 to 15. It's probably a lot less than 10 to 15, probably around 5 to 6 rentals we have in town. We've got a complex there has 4 apartments in it, but that's still hooked on the same septic right now. But yeah, we're doing everything we can to keep Losantville alive, make it just as strong as it was a hundred years ago. It was a booming town back then. There's no reason we can't make it a booming town today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Carol Weaver said and we do have a second phase in our future that we are going to annex to bring more into our community. And it is starting to grow on 35 and 36. If you've been through there, you'll see that we have started to make progress there, and we're very encouraged at that section of Randolph County.

Tom Chalfant said now that's, but that's also included in this septic program, right? I mean, they'll be hooked up to the sewer system too, the intersection of 35 and 36?

Brian Hill said absolutely.

Carol Weaver said yes, yes.

Tom Chalfant said and it was mentioned I think, of burying fiber alongside of this during the same, you know, while you're tearing the ground up, you're going to put fiber in too, is that still on the?

Brian Hill said we were hoping that was going to happen.

Greg Beumer said yeah, right now, that's not part of the contractor's obligation.

Todd said there's a lot of that going on in that area right now, with New Lisbon, yeah, up and down the county roads around Losantville.

Tom Chalfant said well, when you're tearing the town up, I think would be a good time to lay that too, so.

Carol Weaver said it would be perfect if we could work it out with everybody. It would be ideal for everybody.

Greg Beumer said I will add that the town was very appreciative of the county's support. The county loaned Losantville \$750,000.00 to pay for preliminary and final engineering. It saved the town money. They didn't have to go through a bond anticipation note. Saved them those legal fees as well as interest that we would have paid. We repaid that, well that money is in the process of being repaid. Carol gave the town's share of the check to Laura yesterday. So, we were appreciative for that benefit and we've repaid that loan.

Carol Weaver said these dollars will also be monitored, will be paid to contractors, not just individuals like here you go. And we'll pay to contractors, and every site that they connect will be inspected, so it will be done properly. And we will monitor that for sure.

Mike said so with this money, does that make it where residents don't pay anything?

Carol Weaver said we can't guarantee that because we don't have exact costs, because different homes are different distances. Some, that will be true. Some, that have quite a distance to go, it might not be a 100%.

Tom Chalfant said everybody is going to get the same amount?

Carol Weaver said that's what we are, that's what our plan is, yeah.

Missy said I'd make a motion that we approve the \$175,000.00 to Losantville to pay for the hookup to the homes.

Mike seconded the motion.

Laura said of renewable?

Missy said yeah, out of renewable energy.

All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Other Business:**

**Art Moystner, Randolph County Sheriff**

Dave said Sheriff.

Art Moystner said morning. Haven't had a chance to sit down and talk to this body since the incident we had March 14<sup>th</sup>, if my memory serves me correctly. I guess what I would like to share with all of you is the response we had into this county was absolutely amazing. Within 20 minutes of the initial touchdown in this county, I had heard from every sheriff that borders Randolph, and aid came from all of those locations immediately. Not just the sheriffs' office, police departments, fire departments, the communities within those counties, all responded. It was amazing. The citizens that came out that night taking care of each other, and the neighbors. It was an unfortunate tragedy, but it was amazing to see and for Randolph County to be able to say we did that, that we got hit like this with no fatalities, is nothing short of a miracle. So, I wanted to share with you, and I know the mayor is here, Winchester's response was amazing to that, as well. All the entities within the county and all of them coming in worked well together. I think the state sent resources. I think they were activated at 4:30 Friday morning. We had resources here by 10 or 11 to help us manage the incident, which was a big blessing. I think we hadn't had an incident like that since I believe, 86, was the last incident we'd had. So, I wanted to share that with you guys. If you happen to see any of your first responders, whether it's dispatch, police, sheriff's office, fire department personnel, EMS, they did an amazing job. So, I wanted to commend them publicly, and to tell you guys that we had that type of response. The other thing I would like to note is with regard to vehicles, we had two of them damaged. One of them by the tornado itself, unoccupied, and the other one in responding to the incident here in Winchester. We had one of them damaged. We are in the process of getting those estimates so



we can get that information to Laura. That way, we can get that taken care of as we're required to do. We're working on all the labor stuff. I'll be doing that this week to try to get that turned in to make sure I have all of it proper, so we can get our proper reimbursements. The other thing I guess, I would like to share with you is the reason Chris Shaneyfelt is not here today is they are down four dispatchers currently. So, he wasn't able to come in to get in front of you today. As of current, I have three open jail positions. I know two of those have been open since at least January 1, if not prior to that. I can't remember how we filled them and how they've left. Road positions, I actually hired a road officer yesterday. We had an application process that we had went through. In that application process, we had one qualified applicant finish that. I've hired him. I will have another open position May 17<sup>th</sup> we are starting another process. Hopefully, we will get more of a response. So, in bringing that to your attention, I guess, I know we've got a payroll committee and what not, and I just continue to say it would be in the county's best interest to look at the benefit package we have, to look at the pay we have and figure out how we can retain employees. I know everybody is having the hiring issue. But you don't have a hiring issue without a retention issue, and I would like to try to solve the county's retention issue with your guys' help. So, beyond that, everything at the jail is going pretty good. The staff is doing a wonderful job. We've had some updates that have went on, that continue to go on. I know the state fire marshal was in and we had some things that I believe I brought to your attention the last time, that we were going to have to address. I believe I have a company in there working right now that is the last step to get the check off from the state fire marshal's office that we're going to be good. So, anything further, I'd just have questions, if you have some questions, I would answer those if I can.

Todd said as we start to talk about the payroll committee, one question I, comes to mind you know, where would we go to see all the open positions in county government? Is there a single place that we can go on a website and see what's open?

Art Moystner said I don't know that we have a portal that does that in Randolph County. I'm not sure that wouldn't be something that could be requested by you guys for the department heads and elected officials to supply you that current information. I know, from my standpoint with the jail, that seems to change from week to week.

Todd said well I think on both sides from the standpoint of us being able to see what the environment is like you know, as far as turnover and open spots at any moment in time, but also, just in, as a, you know, from a person who is seeking a job standpoint, is there a place for?

Laura said can I speak up here?

Todd said yeah.

Laura said, so, some offices choose to do their own advertisement, and I understand why, like Chris, he puts stuff out. He doesn't give me anything saying I need people. So, I don't advertise anything for him. So, I don't know how many positions until he or Art come and tell us. I know the clerk maybe has a couple of positions open, but she does her own advertising. She doesn't run it through my office. So, I don't really know until.

Art Moystner said is there a place, because I'm not super familiar with it, is there a place on our website?

Laura said Casey, who is Ed Thornburg's secretary, she has been posting job openings on the front page of our website right now. I just told her yesterday to take the ones down that we had because they had been filled. But not everybody gives me that information to put on there.

Art Moystner said I will have that information this afternoon. I did not realize we had anything on our website that did that.

Todd said that's what I'm talking about. That's what I'm asking for. I feel like.

Laura said we just started doing that because she said do you want me to put those on, and I'm like yeah, that would be great. So, it's basically, just the job information saying we have openings, and to apply wherever, whichever office it is.

Todd said because if Chris, for example, has four openings and nobody knows about that, other than just the way he advertises it, and now he's so busy filling in for, you know.

Laura said well he did post it on face book, I seen, and I shared that. You've seen it. Yeah, we share it if we see it, but if we don't know until.

Todd said if you think of the county as a company, you typically do things one way, not each department doing it their own way. And it would be nice to have a central known go-to for job openings within the county, and require department heads to communicate that so you would have a way to keep that current. You know, it's just difficult, you know, it's not our role, but as we're looking at the budget and we're looking at job openings, that we just kind of hear pieces here and there.

Laura said right.

Todd said and it's just not a good way to have information that you would like it centralized and clean. And also, from, you know, if it's maintained, after a while, it would take a little while, but eventually, people start to go to that website to look for job openings and it's free, right? We don't have to advertise.

Laura said right. And we have no money to advertise. So, we do the Indeed. It's not the best, and for your positions, probably not at all, nor Chris's.

Art Moystner said and we tried using Indeed also. I was inundated with applications. I can tell you I was able to sort through those, and we received 100s. And when I sorted through those, most of them were coming from out west or to the east.

Laura said and I can say with the highway supervisor's position, we did Indeed. We got like 64 applicants. I think maybe 3 viable applicants.

Art Moystner said and one of the other things we could consider, and I had looked at, they have a company called Sheriffs' App that puts out an application that basically takes the place of your social media so you can do push notifications because you have an app on the smart phone. And I think one of the things we're trying to adjust to, or at least, I know I am, is I come from a generation that we didn't have all this technology, and things are changing now. And if you're wanting to attract the young people, where they find you is on technology. And to figure out a way that we can do some type of an app that incorporates with our website so that you can put those push notifications on that you have this opening. We could also use it for emergencies. You know, the tornado would have been a great one to have push notifications on some type of a county app platform. But I know they're not cheap to get into because just to build the push, just to build the app, I think a starting price of \$15,000.

Todd said let's go back to our county website. You know, if I'm looking to find a job at Eli Lilly, I would go to Eli Lilly's website and see what jobs are listed. If I'm looking at what's available near me in Randolph County, I'd like to go to Randolph County's website and see the current openings. I know it's got to be maintained and that takes time, but it's free and it just seems like a logical if I'm looking for a job.

Laura said Casey will put them on. I'll just forward the information to her if everybody would send them. But I don't even know, unless they tell me they have positions, and give me the information.

Todd said but if we're doing that, my first, when somebody comes and says we have four positions. My first question was going to be, well are you telling Laura so she can get it on, because that's, like the simplest thing you could do, right?

Gary Friend said Dave, I think the commissioners ought to talk about that and make a policy on this. And we do need that Todd. I think it's completely correct. I think it's going to orient itself out of the personnel department and we have, I'm on the salary committee this year, and I think we should be talking about a plan how we'd like to present it. I think the commissioners need to get involved and get a plan on that happening all the time, by procedure, nobody has a different opinion, this is the county's procedure. So, that's a good idea, Todd.

Art Moystner said and up until today, I would share that probably most department heads didn't know that was something that was something that was, I know I did not know that it was on our website.

Laura said we just started doing it the last couple, the highway superintendent, EMS, we put those, EMS director, we put those on it. And I just told her yesterday to take those down.

Art Moystner said and I think this is one of the things that even with the salary committee, and I know they're talking about salary and benefits and anything of that nature, I think this would be something that would be good to have those conversations also, if you would bring in the department heads and elected officials, maybe have some of those suggestions. So, I agree with you whole heartedly. I think if we try to, as a united front, as a county, instead of all the departments trying it individually, it might solve some issues to bring that in. But I think that's

something that we need to work at to try to bring this new generation or the younger generations into employment within the county.

Missy said it probably wouldn't hurt the county to be, Randolph County United is getting ready to do that college and career fair. You don't have to have each department out there, but if you could find one person who could go out and set up.

Laura said I had sent Daniel an email, it's been a while back, asking, I thought they had some kind of job bulletin board or something.

Missy said they do.

Laura said but I sent him something, he never responded.

Jackie Welch said we do, we have a job order for Randolph County United. It's a benefit for members, I mean, but for our county, I mean, you could obviously use that as well. And you've all been, through email, if you could get your department heads, that's set up to where you could go on and post it from.

Laura said okay, great. Thank you.

Missy said I understand, having to be a member of RCU or the Chamber to get on there, I think you need to drop that and say any employer in the county. You'd just help out the whole county.

Jackie Welch said yeah.

Missy said there are small businesses who cannot compete, it's only 200 bucks, it's, you know, when you run a thin margin of profit. If you guys, if the board could at least discuss that. Every job in the county, have it out there so everybody can see it.

Jackie Welch said yes. Just get with me and I can help with that information and I'll get those posted on there too.

Laura said okay. Thank you.

Art Moystner said good discussion. So, does anybody have any questions for me with regard to the sheriff's office, the tornado response, anything of that nature? Okay, thank you.

### **Minutes of February 6, 2024**

Dave said okay, next on our other business, the minutes of February 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Entertain a motion?

Tom Kerns made motion to approve. Mike seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

### **TIF Annual Report**

Dave said okay, next thing I have is TIF annual report, which is Cardinal Ethanol's area. This report just acknowledges that we have received it as Randolph County Council people. So, I'd entertain a motion to approve.

Laura said the report was done by Baker Tilley, and we do it annually. I just have to present it to you guys.

Todd made motion to approve. Tom Kerns seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Additional Appropriations:**

**Commissioner's**

Overtime/Comp payout	\$30,000.00
Employment separation payout	\$15,000.00

Dave said okay. Next thing we have is additional appropriations. County Commissioner's for overtime and comp payout, and employment separation.

Missy said how do you get comp time?

Laura said anything over regular scheduled hours. So, like not, elected don't get them. I think highway gets paid overtime.

Meeks said exemption employees, exempt employees, is exempting

Laura said so, the first 5 hours after 35 would be 5 hours of comp time. Anything over 40 would be at time-and-a-half comp time.

Missy said so who okays that?

Laura said their office head is supposed to.

Missy said like could you work through lunch?

Laura said if their office head approves that, yeah.

Dave said the department has to approve it.

Tom Chalfant said and there are different rules for different departments, too.

Laura said well, it's the same policy for everybody. It's just a matter of whether, like if it was my employee, they would come to me and say you know, I've got all this to do, can I work through my lunch or can I work over or something, it would be up to them. They'd come to me for approval prior to. I don't know how other department heads do it, but I think the policy says prior to.

Missy said we have a policy?

Laura said it's in the handbook.

Missy said in the handbook?

Meeks said absolutely we have a policy.

Dave said okay. Any other questions here? Entertain a motion for the additional appropriation.

Tom Chalfant made motion to approve. Todd seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Commissioner's**

Computer Maintenance Contracts	\$156,473.00
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Dave said okay, next one we have is Commissioner's computer maintenance contracts.

Laura said this is for that J&K, we talked about last.

Dave said okay. We talked about.

Laura said we approved last time.

Todd said so this is the

Laura said so, you guys approved the contract last meeting. This is just appropriating the money to pay that.

Todd said but it says computer maintenance.

Laura said it gets paid out of the computer maintenance line.

Todd said okay. Thank you.

Todd made motion to approve. Mike seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

**Children's Advocacy**

Coordinator Fee	\$26,700.00
Part time employees	\$1000.00
Training/Schooling	\$1000.00
Postage	\$400.00
Travel/mileage	\$1297.21
Volunteer recruitment	\$5200.00
Printing	\$374.00
Advertising	\$1500.00

Dave said next one, we have the Children's advocate fee. You can see the numbers there for different line items.

Laura said just for information purposes only this is grant money that we appropriate. We wait for the grant money to come in, then we appropriate it at that time. So, it's not additional money they're asking for.

Tom Kerns made motion to approve. Mike seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

<u>Transfers</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
<b>Health Department</b>		
\$30.00	Unappropriated	Social Security
\$7.00	Unappropriated	Medicare
\$2,400.00	Unappropriated	Travel/mileage
\$2,000.00	Unappropriated	Training
\$37,440.00	Unappropriated	Contract work
\$2,000.00	Unappropriated	Med Supplies
\$8,000.00	Unappropriated	Office Supplies
\$39,209.93	Unappropriated	Clinic Supplies

Dave said the last one, they have transfers from the Health Department. It's on the front sheet and the back.

Laura said again, this is not additional monies. It's money that they were waiting to receive. The money is in there, that's in their unappropriated line, they're just appropriating it so it can be used.

Missy said again, it's just my understanding, so, I know when we go through the budgets and review the salaries and all that, I know that each department turns in a budget. So, why so many changes? So, we basically agree with the salaries and we agree with their budget.

Laura said so, sometimes the money's not here yet. So, then we can't appropriate money we don't have. So, then, when the money gets here, that's when we do these.

Missy said okay.

Laura said does that answer what you were?

Missy said yeah, yeah it does.

Laura said so, we're not giving them additional money for more salary or anything. It's just appropriating the money so we can use it to pay what you've already approved.

Meeks said that's the policy we have. Before, we didn't have that. So, we would appropriate the line and they wouldn't have the money in it. But, it was when we had to do all those and people

were blowing through the reserves before we had Baker Tilley here helping. And so, that was a conscious effort not to appropriate.

Laura said not to spend money we don't have yet.

Meeks said make sure the money gets in there before we spend it.

Tom Chalfant said does this make county government.

Meeks said well it makes it a lot better. If we don't have the money, we can't the spend the money and not have it.

Tom Chalfant said well my question is, does this make county government more efficient?

Meeks said I think it's way more efficient because you're not, because if you're a department head, oh, I have \$10,000.00 I can spend out of my training line. But I don't have \$10,000.00 in that training line because the money hasn't come in yet. But I'm the department head, I have \$10,000.00 in my budget means I can spend \$10,000.00. The county council approved it. Well okay, where's the money? Well it hasn't come in from the grant yet, so you don't have \$10,000.00. Do you see what I'm saying, Tom? It's better management of the department heads to be able to track.

Tom Chalfant said yeah, I guess I'm glad we do it better than we used to.

Tom Kerns said well, at that time, there was you know, we were borrowing money from Rainy Day between when we were getting our funds from the state. So, it was necessary.

Meeks said I don't know if you say, but it's way more, I think efficient. Easier to track by the employees. Some people got it and wouldn't spend the money, other people said I have the money, so, I can spend it.

Laura said I will say I think we still do a resolution to borrow at the beginning of the year, but we haven't had to do that for several years now, since we've changed this so that we're doing the additional when the money gets here.

Todd made motion to approve. Mike seconded the motion. All aye votes. Motion carried.

Laura said and Missy, it's not always that way. Sometimes the additional is because they've used their line that you approved in their budget.

Missy said right, and they need more money?

Laura and they're asking for more money to put in that line.

Missy said yeah.



Laura said so, it's not always grant money that their additional, so you're right, I mean, sometimes it is. In these cases, I try, I'll try to explain that each, you know, whenever I can.

Missy said okay.

**Citizen Comments (3 minutes)**

Dave said okay. Any citizens' comments?

Gary Friend said I have one thing to bring you up to date. For the council, and then probably the commissioners, we haven't discussed it, with the salary committee. I was planning to discuss this. Maybe it's time that we start working at getting off of comp time and getting overtime funding in the budget for the department heads to be able to maneuver around a little bit. But to expire, when we use all that, it's not the department that's going to refund, it's the county council, so, like to say we agree with the overtime event. If we have a tornado, we all know we're going to have to get some money in there. But we have department heads who have different views of disciplinary actions. They may not be as astute as some other department heads. Therefore, the employees feel like they're being treated indifferently, and they probably are, and following the law. And another thing I would like for the council to think about is I would like personally, and I'll talk to the commissioners, personal time. We are forcing people to be dishonest to use time up versus lose it. There's no reason in my mind that we should do that. We should switch that over to another category and say be honest people. But if you've got several sick days and you're getting up on retirement, nobody can say you're not sick, but you're just forcing the mentality of finding a way to use it. I don't think we need to be there anymore. I think a lot of industries moved away from it, a lot of county governments moved away from it. So, as we come into this budget with the salary committee, and I think we should start meeting in June, the members that are on there, maybe we can put a plan forward and we can, the rest of the commissioners and I can talk, and do we want to go as a no comp time county, and put away some of this stuff, where people get treated indifferently. And it causes other people to have heartburn, and you can't blame them for that heartburn.

Bev said that would require a change in the handbook and all.

Gary Friend said it requires a big change. That's why we're having a discussion out loud.

Bev said yes, I've worked in the place where it's PDO, personal day off, for whatever your need is.

Gary Friend said right, however you want to do it.

Bev said it's made it so much easier to manage.

Gary Friend said yeah, but you know the council has certainly put things into the sheriff's budget in a fund amount that's going to require people to say what's the average comp time to the county at this time, where the sheriff can overcome the emergency. The county has no control or idea it was coming. But we can put comp time in the budgets and say if you're running out, you

need to get in front of the elected officials, tell us why, and get an approval to go further than that. And I think it would work. I don't think everybody is on comp time. I don't know for sure.

Laura said highway is overtime. I don't know about EMS. Is EMS overtime, Brad?

Gary Friend said I mean, across Indiana. Highway's overtime paid out. EMS is overtime paid out. So, you know, we're putting money in now paying 911 center overtime to keep up. But we're getting there already. We're not that far away. We're really not that far away from just ending some of this stuff and anyway, that's my thought. Have you guys got anything else for me? I'm going to be late getting to Anderson, so I'd like to get moving. Appreciate all of you, thank you very much.

Dave said okay. I'll go around the room here. Tom, do you have anything for the?

Tom Kerns said just to go along with what Gary was saying. If department heads had a budget for the overtime, it would make them manage it more than they would for comp time, because you have a strict budget and everything. We've talked about it in the past. But beside that, I don't have anything.

Dave said okay.

Todd said I don't have anything.

Dave said Mike?

Mike said I don't have anything.

Dave said Tom? Bev?

Bev said I mentioned to Dave earlier, I visited with George Caster this morning and I'm going to ask him to come to the meeting next month, which is on Wednesday I believe, after election day. And he's got a lot of data with regards to the tornado. A good map, stuff to look at, and how it's going to impact our assessed value over the course of the next, you know, three years at least, and probably further.

Tom Chalfant said I, maybe back up if you'll allow me, I had a call from a farmer who come and complained to me that his taxes went up, farmland, went up 20%, which is on a rolling average formula, it's complex. It's based on crop prices a couple years ago, but anyway, he also pointed out that we had about the highest taxes in the state. I explained to him because we are a rural county, not a lot of infrastructure, not a lot of tax base, the rural counties are up there against it. But again, we just keep getting assaulted with more and more, and we have more and more costs, more and more personnel, more vehicles, more of everything. And I well, I'm bowing out, so you guys can handle it.

Dave said I agree with you Tom. And you know, that's one of the thrusts, when I'm at the legislative committee meetings, that we've got to quit, especially on small counties. We just don't have the population or the industry to continue their programs. And that's something else you guys are going to have to go forward on, the ones that are left here to make sure we meet that. And I agree with Bev on the assessments. It's going to be a change here the next year or two. This year they'll still have to pay the normal fees, but next year, there's probably several hundreds of thousands of dollars of assessment that won't be there.

Bev said yeah, he said we have 365 structures, I believe that were either demolished or damaged heavily.

Tom Chalfant said so, there will be a gap year or two until they're rebuilt.

Bev said the assessed value will not come back right away.

Tom Kerns said with all that is one of the reasons we need to keep control of the Renewal Energy money within the county.

Dave said we have to keep control. There's no way around it. Missy?

Missy said nothing.

Dave said Meeks?

Meeks said nothing.

Dave said anybody else?

**Adjournment**

Dave said I guess I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.

Bev made motion to adjourn. Tom Chalfant seconded the motion. All aye votes. Meeting adjourned.

Reviewed and accepted this 4 day of June, 2024.

RANDOLPH COUNTY COUNCIL

David Benkenslofer

Tom Chalfant

Beverly Held

James W. Hill

Michelle L. Hill

John Hill

[Signature]

ATTESTED:

Laura J Martip

Laura J Martip, Auditor