

May 8, 2023

The Wabash County Board of Commissioners met in regular session in the Wabash County Courthouse on Monday, May 8, 2023. Chairman Brian K. Hauptert called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. with all commissioners present: Hauptert, Barry J. Eppley, and Jeff D. Dawes. The proceedings were recorded by Wabash County Auditor Marcie Shepherd. The minutes of the May 1, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Eppley made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Dawes seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Beverly Ferry, CEO Living Well in Wabash County, submitted the 2023 first quarter invoice for the 5311 Transit CARES grant in the amount of \$116,514. The invoice was approved for payment by the commissioners.

Terry Burnworth, Owner's Rep for the Jail, presented the following change orders for approval:

1. Kettelhut Change Order #09-13 (Repaint Cell Block D \$17,493)
2. Kettelhut Change Order #09-14 (Add carpet to Unit A \$16,843)
3. Quality Heating & Plumbing CO #23-07 (Add 2-4" butterfly valves \$9,829)
4. Quality Heating & Plumbing CO #23-08 (Install Unit D shut-off valves \$8,223)
5. Quality Heating & Plumbing CO #23-09 (Install Unit D 2" & 1.5" shut-off valves \$11,705)
6. Quality Heating & Plumbing CO #23-10 (Tie together Unit D cold water system \$4,979)
7. Quality Heating & Plumbing CO #23-11 (Move water & drain lines to install a ship ladder behind cells \$1,223; Rework Unit A floor drains for tilt flooring \$3,741; Move 1.5" water line in floor for DT 1 control box to a different wall \$1,285; Re-route 2" drain from breakroom on 2nd floor to chase behind cells \$1,713. Total cost \$7,962)
8. Quality Heating & Plumbing CO #23-12 (DS-1 Drench shower \$1,375)

Dawes made a motion to approve the change orders as presented. Eppley seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

Burnworth requested the approval of an RFP for Sheriff's office furniture. Eppley made a motion to approve the RFP. Dawes seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

Ryan Baker, Wabash County Sheriff, reported the jail currently has 71 inmates, with 8 additional being housed in the Miami County Jail, 2 in the Fulton County Jail and 40 in the Tipton County Jail. Last week there were 11 book-ins and 6 transports to other facilities. The peak population was 73. The total prisoner count was 120.

Marcie Shepherd, Wabash County Auditor, presented:

1. Accounts payable claims and allowances for docket ending 05/08/2023. Eppley made a motion to approve the claims and allowances as presented. Dawes seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.
2. Payroll claims and allowances for pay period ending 4/29/2023. Dawes made a motion to approve the claims and allowances as presented. Eppley seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.
3. Jail Bond Packet #25 for \$1,740,973.75 to be dispersed. Eppley made a motion to approve. Dawes seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.
4. LIT monthly distribution in the amount of \$1,245,521.67. Eppley made a motion to approve the distribution as presented. Dawes seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.
5. CVET semi-annual distribution in the amount of \$115,527. Dawes made a motion to approve the distribution as presented. Eppley seconded the motion; it passed by a 3-0 vote.

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Chairman Hauptert stated he has a contract with Johnson Controls for Steve Downs to review.

OLD BUSINESS:

Keith Walters, representing the Health Department presented prices of several used vehicles similar to the new vehicles requested previously by the department. Another quote is expected. The commissioners kept the issue under advisement.

Hauptert asked if there were any ADA or Title VI concerns. None were heard.

In public comment:

Cynthia Donovan of the Roann Covered Bridge Association advised the commissioners to expected a new roof quote for the Covered Bridge.

Several people were in attendance concerning solar farm issues. Chris Renn read the following text attached to a signed petition:

“The citizens of Wabash County respectfully request a MORATORIUM on ALL wind and Solar energy related issues involving Wabash County, the solar ordinance and any discussions currently in progress with any solar or wind energy company until the state of Indiana has a chance to complete their study on issues involved with the decommissioning of solar panel and wind power equipment disposal.

Senate Bill 33 was signed into law on 4/20/23 and is summarized here: Solar panel and wind power equipment disposal study. Directs the Indiana department of environmental management (IDEM) to conduct a study concerning the decommissioning and disposal of solar panels and wind power equipment. Sets forth certain topics that IDEM must consider in conducting the study. Provides that IDEM may consult with the Indiana utility regulatory commission as necessary to conduct the study. Requires IDEM to: (1) file a report on its findings and recommendations resulting from the study with the chairman of the legislative council; and (2) present the report to the interim study committee on energy utilities, and telecommunications; not later than October 1, 2024. We request this MORATORIUM to last from this date 5/8/23 or as soon as possible, until 1/1/2025. The recycling study will be completed by then and some time elapsed for us all to familiarize ourselves with the information. During this time of the MORATORIUM, we would like to have the opportunity to discuss and adjust the setback requirements currently set forth in the existing solar ordinance. These setbacks are far too close to anyone’s home. Public sentiment and input was absent from the prior discussion due to lack of notification and public awareness when creating these setbacks. We want the opportunity to participate in drawing up new setbacks that will work for the residents of Wabash County. We would also like to address the methods that are used to inform the public when major issues like this arise. We have included petition signatures totaling 485 that were accumulated in the span of 3 weeks once people discovered there was a chance of solar panels invading our farmlands. We feel our input is extremely necessary on something of this scale that can be so incredibly harmful to our county.

Thank you,
Citizens of Wabash County”

Chris Hickman then spoke of his travels around Indiana and suggested citizens look at other communities and homes where solar is in place. Among other thoughts, he stated that setbacks should protect Wabash County homeowners and Ag 1 should never be rezoned for any other purpose.

Dawes made a motion to take the request for a Moratorium under advisement pending research by the county attorney. Hauptert seconded the motion; it passed by a 2-0 vote. Eppley abstained.


2-0

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With no other public comment or other business to come before the Board of Commissioners the meeting was adjourned. The commissioners will next meet on Monday, May 15, 2023.


Also present: *In person*: Shelly Baucco, Cole Wyatt, Steve Downs, Dave Nelson, Michael Hawkins, Phyllis Hawkins, Pam Hawkins, Louella Krom, Lisa Downs, Renee Long, Larry Long, Lorraine Campbell, Nicky Burnsworth, Marcella Palmer, Bev Burnsworth, Cheryl Ron, David Cotton and Gary Ridenour; *Via Zoom*: B. Campbell, Amanda, Jade Hall, Melanie Penn, Connie, Suzanne, Brian Swihart, Denise Enyeart and Don Jarvis.

WABASH COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


Brian K. Hauptert
Chairman


Jeff D. Dawes
Vice-Chairman


Barry J. Eppley

Attest: 
Marcie Shepherd, Wabash County Auditor