

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION  
August 7, 2023**

The Grant County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on August 7, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the Grant County Complex Council Chambers located at 401 South Adams Street, Marion, IN.

In attendance were Commissioners Ron Stewart, Mark Bardsley, and Steve Wright. Also present were Auditor Angela Jarvis, County Administrator/HR Director Justin Saathoff, and Financials Deputy Stacey Stevens.

Commissioner Bardsley called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Pastor Jeff Luedtke of Fairmount Wesleyan Church led in prayer. Commissioner Wright led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PREAPPROVED CLAIMS**

July 24, 2023: General: \$211,093.22  
Other: \$52,829.37  
Highway: \$328,231.20  
**TOTAL: \$592,153.79**

July 31, 2023: General: \$107,501.40  
Other: \$115,230.11  
Highway: \$65,262.26

Commissioner Wright made a motion to ratify the claim dockets as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

August 7, 2023: General: \$115,985.26  
Other: \$75,254.82  
Highway: \$246,122.80  
**TOTAL: \$437,362.88**

Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the claim dockets as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

**PAYROLL**

Payroll #15 carried a gross total of \$571,147.51. Formal preapproval was given on July 18, 2023 and paid out on July 21, 2023. Payroll #16 carried a gross total of \$576,095.66. Formal preapproval was given on August 1, 2023 and paid out on August 4, 2023. Commissioner Wright made a motion to formally ratify preapproved payroll #15 and payroll #16 as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

**Minutes**

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes from April 17, 2023, and May 1, 2023, as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0.

**Receipt of Monthly Reports**

Commissioner Wright made a motion to receive in the monthly report month ending 6-30-2023 from the Clerk of Courts. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Wright made a motion to receive in the amended reports for January through December 2022 from the Treasurer. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to receive in the reports for April and May 2023 from the Treasurer. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0.

### **Board Updates**

None

### **IT Report**

IT Director Marcus Elliott presented a proposal from Granite for the internet at the EMS building. This is a dedicated internet circuit through AT&T. The cost is \$1,438.00 a month or \$17,259.00 annually. Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve as requested at \$17,259.00 annually. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0.

### **Highway Report**

Superintendent David White reported that the Deercreek detour has been pulled after requesting the state to wait until after April 8<sup>th</sup>. The log jams have been cleared at Branson and 10<sup>th</sup> Street in Gas City. An estimate was presented for mulch grinding from Tawa Landscaping Company in the amount of \$7,000.00. The Commissioners gave consent to use Tawa Landscaping Company.

Superintendent White stated Bridge #789 in Marion was replaced this spring. This was a Community Crossings project and it has been closed out completely. There is a meeting next week for Bridge #791 located on 14<sup>th</sup> Street in Marion. It will need replaced in the next few years.

Superintendent White presented the Commissioners with a copy of the chip seal program that was completed this year for the east side of the county, totaling 75 miles. Paving alongside Brooks Construction will begin in the next 2-3 weeks. The Community Crossings project are first and then onto other county projects.

The engineering company asked to send the agreement with Blackford County's windfarm project. It is still under review.

Commissioner Bardsley asked about the detours and school buses getting through. Superintendent White said he put barricades out and he is working with the Sheriff's Department on this. Hopefully the schools have already planned different routes to get around until this is completed.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **1. EMS Building Update - Duaine Ashcraft, EMS**

Duaine Ashcraft and Dawn Harness presented a list of items that still need to be completed for the new building to be ready. Commissioner Wright asked if these items were part of the building cost. Dawn Harness stated these items are above and beyond the building cost. Commissioner Bardsley stated these are the things needed to come up to the standards that is required. After some questions about storage, the Commissioners stated they would take this under advisement. They asked for more bids

and for Administrator Saathoff to work with them to develop a plan. This is to be revisited at the next meeting.

2. Environmental Solutions Proposal - Darren Reese, SESCO

Darren Reese presented the environmental solutions proposal for the old Dana property to the board. He explained that is in 2 parts. This is a prime piece of property for economic development for Grant County and it is best to know what condition it is in prior to acquiring it. The first phase costs \$6,792.50. The second phase is \$6,653.50; totaling \$13,446.00. The plan is only to do a phase 2 if needed. After some questions and discussion, Commissioner Stewart made a motion to accept the contract with SESCO regarding the former Dana facility and authorizing President Bardsley to sign. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. Safe Exchange Zone Proposal - Eric Fields, Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Garcia presented the proposal to the Commissioners. There has been issues with e-commerce and child exchanges. The Sheriff explained the need to create a safe place that is monitored and recorded where people can go do those things. It does not guarantee safety, but it is safer for someone to go to a public location that is being recorded. The Sheriff's Office has partnered with all other cities within Grant County to create safe zones. The one in discussion today is for Grant County. It would be in this parking lot by the jail. Captain Eric Fields explained the designated area will be the southeast side by the sally port, if approved. People are less likely to commit a crime if they know they are being recorded. Sheriff Garcia stated he will do a press release to all media and put it on Facebook, the radio, etc. Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the safe exchange zone request. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

2. Presentation of Oak Hill MOU - Del Garcia, Sheriff

Sheriff Garcia presented a MOU with Oak Hill Community Schools for a Safety Resource Officer. This position will cover the school during the school year and then work with the inmate work crew in Gas City during the summer. The Sheriff's office was able to partner with both Oak Hill and Gas City lending to this being done without any cost to the county. The Gas City MOU will be presented at a later time. Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the contract with Oak Hill as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

3. Central Dispatch Project Invoice, J & K Communications - Mark Bardsley, Commissioner

Commissioner Bardsley presented the final invoice for the Central Dispatch project. Public Safety Director Kevin Hicks stated the system has been installed and is fully functioning. There are still some minor issues that need to be resolved. Director Hicks advised withholding payment for a couple more weeks. There are some meetings coming up very soon with the responders and J&K. The Commissioners agreed to hold off until the issues are resolved.

4. Gas City-Mill Township Public Library Appointment - Justin Saathoff, Administrator

Administrator Saathoff presented an appointment request from Gas City-Mill Township Public Library Director Jennifer Vermillion. The current appointment has scheduling conflicts and is unable to attend most meetings. Ms. Vermillion suggested a new appointment, Christina Payne. Commissioner Bardsley stated that the appointment must be vacated before appointing someone else. Administrator Saathoff stated he will let them know and will bring the resignation back to the next meeting.

5. GIS Data Request, RMA - Justin Saathoff, Administrator

Jason Miller, City Engineer for Gas City, requested GIS data to be released from Schneider. IDEM has mandated certain data from Gas City to remain in compliance. Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the GIS data request. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

The mayor of Gas City, Bill Rock, was asked by the board to share any updates. Mayor Rock stated they are about 2 ½ weeks ahead of schedule and are within budget for the new performing arts center. He invited all elected officials to a beam signing on Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.

6. Letters of Engagement, KSM - Mark Bardsley, Commissioner

Commissioner Bardsley presented two letters of engagement from KSM. One letter is an agreement for financial advice for ARPA funding and spending. The other is an agreement for financial advice for the new jail. This is a comprehensive financial planning tool that would coordinate and reconcile jail related items with the county's general budget. They would help to identify future events/issues, alongside overseeing operational progress. This company could be useful to the Council, but the Council has the right to hire their own for financial services. Commissioner Bardsley questioned Councilman Jonathan Perez, who was in attendance. "I am cautious because we may have to take steps. We may have to engage to do floor plans, engineering, those types of things. We need those numbers crunched. At the same time, the Council has the right to hire their own people. If we do go to a project that costs \$80 to \$110 million dollars, you guys will be crunching those numbers. I believe we have the right to contract that information. We can then give you the data. You guys will need to wrestle with the whole concept and maybe want to hire someone different than who we have, to brief you and address the financial concerns in the future. What is your take on it since you are a councilman?" Councilman Perez stated that he would agree with the assessment. He recommended to discuss the matter in the upcoming joint session. Commissioner Bardsley agreed it may be wise to hold off and make that a part of the jail discussion at the joint session. Commissioners Wright and Stewart agreed.

7. Ratification of Downtown Event Request, Marion City - Mark Bardsley, Commissioner

Commissioner Bardsley presented the ratification. It was for a downtown city event held on and around the courthouse square. The event has already taken place and a preapproval was given. Commissioner Wright presented a card from Kayla Johnson and the city of Marion expressing thanks. They did apologize for not reaching out to the Commissioners sooner. Commissioner Wright made a motion to ratify the decision to let them use the property. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

8. Presentation of BOT Contract - Mark Bardsley, Commissioner

Commissioner Bardsley presented a BOT (build, operate, transfer) contract with Patrick Conner Sullivan for a new jail. He is experienced in the BOT method and has worked on numerous projects throughout the state. Grant County currently has a BOT contract with him for the upcoming boiler/chiller project. This contract is for consideration and will be presented and discussed at the joint session. No action was taken.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Lois Jones of 3982 Lagro Road, Marion asked about the safe exchange zone and where the recorded data was stored.

The next scheduled meeting will be August 21, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Commissioner Bardsley recessed the meeting at 11:26 a.m.