

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION
September 5, 2023**

The Grant County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on September 5, 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 and County Administrator/HR Director Justin Saathoff.

Commissioner Bardsley called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Bardsley led in prayer. Commissioner Stewart led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PREAPPROVED CLAIMS

August 28, 2023: General: \$84,174.82
Other: \$78,868.25
Highway: \$75,346.47
TOTAL: \$238,389.54

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

September 5, 2023: General: \$119,097.27
Other: \$87,234.30
Highway: \$62,589.49
TOTAL: \$268,921.06

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

SINGLE PREAPPROVALS

8-31-2023 Southcentral \$4,455.87
8-31-2023 Elan Financial Services \$2,205.77

Commissioner Stewart made a motion to ratify the preapproved claims as preapproved. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0.

PAYROLL

Payroll #18 carried a gross total of \$580,714.97. Formal preapproval was given on August 30, 2023, and paid out on September 1, 2023. Commissioner Stewart made a motion to formally ratify preapproved payroll #18 as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0.

Minutes

Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the minutes from the executive session on 5/15/23 as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Bardsley; motion carried 2-1 (Commissioner Stewart abstained). Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular session on June 5, 2023, as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

Receipt of Monthly Reports

By common consent the Commissioners received in the monthly report from the Clerk of Circuit Courts month ending 7-31-2023. Commissioner Wright made a motion to receive in the Treasurer's reports for 1-31-23, 2-28-23, 3-31-23, 4-30-23, 5-31-23, 6-30-23 and 7-31-23. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

Board Updates

Public Safety Communications Director Kevin Hicks requested to have the tower sites inspected. The inspection is required every two years. The cost would be \$6,000 total for all 3 sites. The cradle point devices still need installed as well. An estimate for the installation was presented in the amount of \$3,247.89. Director Hicks stated he would pay for the installation if the Commissioners could cover the cost for the inspection. The inspection would be by MX Solutions. This is the company that originally constructed the towers. Commissioner Bardsley asked to have the quote/contract stating the amount and work being done for review. Director Hicks stated he will get the agreement.

IT Report

IT Director Marcus Elliott asked permission to go live with the new website. Once it is live, it can be updated and brought up to where it needs to be. The Commissioners agreed by consent to go live next Tuesday at 9:30 am.

Director Elliott presented a quote to install 2 indoor cameras in 2 separate departments due to safety concerns. These cameras would record audio and video and can be monitored from anywhere. The total is \$2,030.80. This includes 3 years of updates, support, and maintenance. Commissioner Wright made a motion to install the cameras in the departments. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

Highway Report

Superintendent David White updated the board on current projects. Paving will begin today for Community Crossings projects, starting on 38th Street out to 400 east. Garthwaite road will be after that. Gas City was awarded a portion of their roadway on Garthwaite, but it stopped short of the city limits. They were not funded all the way to the north end of their city limits. Basically, the area right in front of EMS and the Highway department will not get paved this year because of that. Superintendent White stated Brooks quoted the job at \$60,000.00. Commissioner Wright made a motion to pay the \$60,000.00 balance on the Garthwaite road project (not to exceed \$60,000.00) with the understanding Grant County will be paid back next year in 2024, pending approval of Gas City. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

Superintendent White stated the pole barn company will be fixing the lean-to next week that was damaged in the storm. When the old roof is taken off, interior damage can then be assessed. The damage is estimated at \$35,000.00 right now pending investigation and with a \$10,000 deductible.

Superintendent White also stated that he expects to get some elevation shots today to help address the EMS drainage issue. He also commented that difficulties continue with the Keefe property in Crane Pond. There is a 6" main gas line that runs out there, from the west side of Marion clear out to Chapel where the church is at. The gas company gave no indication of making any effort to allow anyone near it or have it moved. Commissioner Bardsley stated this will get thrown back to the Drainage Board and city utilities will wrestle with this.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Upland STEM Open Area Project - Matt Voss, NearSpace Education

Matt Voss presented the project to the Commissioners. It is a \$400,000.00 project. \$315,000.00 has been raised so far. This includes an amphitheater, learning center, a gathering space, and a small creek. Upland has not had a downtown or town square for a long time. There have been several buildings removed that have been sitting there unoccupied for 20 years. Mr. Voss requested the Commissioners to consider using ARPA funds toward the project. Discussion ensued concerning ARPA money to help fund the remaining \$85,000.00. Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve \$35,000.00 to the Upland STEM project pending the Council's appropriation. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart; motion carried 3-0.

2. Congruence Art Festival Request - Laya Price-Bodkin, City of Marion

Kayla Johnson requested the use of the courthouse square for the annual art festival on September 15th from 4PM to 10PM. Ryan Drown, executive director of Fusion Arts Alliance, explained what to expect with the festival including bands, food, and arts and craft vendors. 2023 marks the 3rd year of the event. Commissioners approved permission by common consent.

3. Health Officer Appointment Recommendation - Tara Street, Health Dept.

Office Manager Tara Street presented the recommendation for the Grant County Health Officer. The Health Board unanimously voted on August 28th to recommended Dr. Brenda Woods to the position. The recommendation comes with a start date of September 11th. Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the Health Board recommendation. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0. Dr. Rudolph was thanked for assisting the county through this transition.

4. EMS Position Recommendations - Duaine Ashcraft and Dawn Harness, EMS

Director Duaine Ashcraft gave an update on the EMS fire. 3 sets of inspectors and adjusters out have been on site. A content crew is due any time to take inventory. The hospital and Lutheran have been very generous in donating medical supplies that were destroyed in the fire. Electric Plus is recommending another 200-amp box to be installed. Discussion ensued concerning the new building. Director Ashcraft stated he will be retiring at the end of the year and the hope is for Dawn to become director. This is an appointed position by the Commissioners.

5. Employee Whistleblower Protection Policy - Justin Saathoff, Administrator

Administrator Justin Saathoff presented the policy drafted under United States code 4712 that provides law abiding protection for any employee that reports abuse as far as federal grants or funding is concerned. Employees will not be discharged or discriminated against for reprisal for disclosing or reporting such abuse. Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the Employee Whistleblower Protection Policy. Seconded by Commissioner Wright; motion carried 3-0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Randy Atkins of 8560 S. Wheeling Pike, Fairmount thanked the Commissioners for their support of the STEM project in Upland. Mr. Atkins stated that his concern was about the jail and the condition it is in currently. Commissioner Bardsley raised the pain points of the building including the age, ADA and medical deficiencies, and deteriorating equipment and structure. Mr. Atkins also asked if there has been consideration of alternative programming to reduce the placement of the less offensive criminals rather than them becoming inmates. Commissioner Wright explained some of the ways this is currently being

done, eventually pointing to the judicial system. There are issues with shortages of attorney that affects the speediness of the courts. It was also commented that the home detention program is at capacity right now.

The next scheduled meeting will be September 5, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

Commissioner Bardsley recessed the meeting at 11:29 a.m.