

FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Monday, August 16, 2021

Meeting Called to Order at 6:00 p.m. with Pledge to the Flag. Present: Bryan Lewis, Rick Ranstead, Steve Metzger, County Attorney Holli Shorter-Pifer and Deputy Auditor Amy Roe.

RUSSELL PHILLIPS/TAXPAYER – Russell Phillips referred to House Bill 1381 from the last legislative session that was introduced to take over setting requirements for the entire state for wind and solar power. The organization Hoosiers for Home Rule became active during the legislative session consisting of individuals interested in retaining local control. Hoosiers for Home Rule retained a lobbyist to oppose the bill. A 21st Century Energy Policy Development Task force who met in 2019 and 2020 was very influential in drafting HB 1381. Legislature extended the life of the Task Force for two years and will meet to discuss (wind and solar power) at least five times this year. All indications lead to ears need to be kept up on this. In 2018 in the zoning amendments made changes for wind power but solar did not appear. In October 2018 additional amendments was language in regards to solar. Pulaski County, in conjunction with Starke County, is underway (The Mammoth Solar project) that is more than twelve thousand acres. He spoke with a resident in Miami County who reported a solar project with over two thousand acres that is underway. He reported that Bryan stated that he does not have as many reservations about solar energy as he did with wind energy. Russell would hate to think of twelve thousand acres installations, or even a two-hundred-acre installation. He addressed contradicting language in the zoning ordinance concerning wind energy. Russell would like to see a robust conversation concerning solar energy and would like it addressed in the zoning ordinance. Jim Straeter addressed the efficiency in solar power. He stated that the system in TALMA will save REMC \$150,000 a year and they will own the system in 15 years. The next generation of panels will deliver 2,000,000 kW h on five acres. Jim stated that investors would be looking for large plots of land for a solar farm. Jim urges that if there is a project here we do the best job we can to get it sighted where it is good for the citizens of the County. Jim pointed out that there was some legislature in the last session that allows the Commissioners to change the base value of an acre so there is a lot more revenue off an acre of solar versus an acre of farm. He would also be happy to work with the anybody to be sure that the opportunity is there for the County to participate in responsible ways. The Assessor stated that typically land would be assessed as commercial land rather than farm land increasing the value. Jim stated that he believes the land can be assessed for as much as \$8,000 an acre. Bryan agrees that Commissioners do need to look into averting a disaster if a bill should pass.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT – John Geier presented permit requests for consideration:

21-27 REMC requests a permit to bore a line under the road at 6768 north Talma Road for a line for the new solar site. Rick motioned to approve, Steve seconded; carries 3-0.

21-28 Sterling Cole requests a permit for NIPSCO to retire approximately 113 ft. of 5/8 gas service from a home by cutting a riser at ground level and digging 4'x4' bell and disconnecting gas main located south of centerline of N Lakeshore Dr. Rick motioned to approve, Steve seconded; carries 3-0.

21-29 Darrell Bright requests a driveway permit at 4664 N 600 W. This will be a Y-shaped driveway with 2 entrances requiring 8" culverts. Rick motioned to approve, Steve seconded; carries 3-0.

21-30 Ryan Kelley requests for NIPSCO to install 260 feet of line with one road bore at 7565 S 800 W. Steve motioned to approve, Rick seconded; carries 3-0.

John updated on department activities including chip seal and cleaning storm damage. An engineering study was performed on 50 N/100 W and a 4-way stop is not needed. The highway and sheriff departments will take another look at US 31 to 200 W to recommend a speed limit to Commissioners. Community Crossing grant project for CR 650 E is complete. E & B Paving will move on to 775 W, 250 S and 600 W. Commissioners suggest using the PASER scale to find projects for 2022 CCMG projects. INDOT

asked if federal aid bridge projects #32 and #50 could move the 2022 projects from the fall to the spring. Commissioners approve if the funds are available. John requests the County to reimburse employees to obtain a CDL after hiring. Parks department have requested the highway department to pave the Prairie's Edge parking lot. A taxpayer has requested a sign for a hearing-impaired child; liability prevents the county from doing so.

EMA – Larry Hoover has applied for the grant for salary reimbursement devices and reimbursement for the LUCAS devices through NICF. He will talk with Council tomorrow concerning hiring part-time help.

SHERIFF – Chris Sailors stated the cooling tower at the jail is leaking and will cost \$2,585 to repair. He is looking to do a food service contract for the new jail. Marshall County is interested in having a contract for holding up to 10 inmates in Fulton County. The punch list is being worked on including touching up paint and washer hook-ups. The shelving may be crowded in the Coroner's parking area. The furniture for the meeting room is scheduled to come in this week. The fencing to the west side of the building for evacuation will begin being installed next week. The hook-up connection was finished today by D & D. The jail inspection is scheduled for August 31st for the old and new jails. The public open house will be September 24th from 3-7 p.m. Council has granted additional full-time correctional officers and all positions are currently full. There were 6 inmates, 3 jailers and a nurse that tested positive for COVID-19. The Jail Commander reached out to the Indiana State Department of Health for protocol.

ASSESSOR – Judy Dancy presented data concerning how many counties contract out reassessment. She reported 19 counties reassessing in-house. She requests permission to bid the next reassessment cycle. Rick stated that he understands the need for the contract but does not think it is necessary to increase the part-time employee to full-time. Steve would like to move toward more in-house assessing in the next five years.

COMMUNICATIONS – Gail Karas was unable to attend. Rick requested on her behalf to request from Council to equip the 3 additional consoles purchased for the new 911 dispatch center in case of emergencies in Cass, Miami or Pulaski counties. Phyl Olinger questioned what percent of the time they would be vacant. Though vacant most of the time Larry Hoover stated they are also used for redundancy and we are the only county of the four (Fulton, Cass, Miami, Pulaski) that don't have additional equipment for emergencies. Commissioners agree one or two would be beneficial and leave the third vacant.

FEDCO – Terry Lee delivered the 2022 budget request. The total budget is up \$5,000 from last year and down \$8,000 from the year before. The county request of \$110,300 is the same as last year's request, he is requesting the same from Rochester City. Of the association dues request \$15,380 is for North Central Indiana Regional Planning Council (NCIRPC), \$3,000 Lake Manitou Partnership, and \$1,000 to Lake Manitou Association. Professional Services include: \$25-26,000 BizGrow (Amy Beechy), \$3,000 to Small Business Development Center (IU South Bend), the remainder for Blacketer Dr. engineering fees. His salary is \$67,000 and his secretary is at \$34,000. He is requesting an increase to their salaries of over 2%. He would entertain lowering travel expenses if necessary.

ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING FULTON COUNTY AS A BROADBAND READY COMMUNITY – Steve motioned to perform the third reading by title only, Rick seconded; carries 3-0. Bryan performed the third reading by title only. Rick motioned to approve the ordinance, Steve seconded; carries 3-0.

COST ALLOCATION PLAN (CAP) SERVICE AGREEMENT – Bryan reviewed the contract for child support cost reimbursement, Holli Shorter-Pifer has reviewed. Steve motioned to approve the contract with MAXIMUS, Rick seconded; carries 3-0.

2021 PERSONNEL POLICY – The proposed policy changes include minimum mandatory lunch of 30 minutes, work from home policy and emergency closing. Rick motioned to approve the policy changes, Steve seconded; carries 3-0.

MINUTES – Meeting minutes August 2nd and August 5th were motioned for approval by Steve, Rick seconded; carries 3-0.

CLAIMS – Approved as presented

2021 LIT Distribution	\$	652,487.75
TRANSPO Van Distribution QPA #44253	\$	45,523.00
SIHO Bank Fee – May 2021	\$	80.17
Payroll 8/13/2021	\$	210,223.06
Payroll Deductions 8/13/2021	\$	72,426.96
Host Fees July 2021	\$	33,333.33
August 16 th Misc. Claims	\$	507,141.48
Tourism	\$	2,065.00
Jury Pay 25C01-2007-F2-000496	\$	4,868.08
Jail Construction Project	\$	374,699.65

TRANSFERS – Approved as presented

Department	Fund	From Account	To Account	Amount
Coroner	County General	X-Ray & Lab	Vehicle Conversion	\$500.00
Van lettering expense increased due to additional lettering.				
Circuit Court	County General	Mileage	Interpreter	\$100.00
Interpreter for both sides of case.				
Parks Dept.	Host Fee	Demolition	Parking Lot Maintenance	\$1,905.92
For parking bumpers at the new parking lot at Germany Bridge				

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS – Approved as presented

Department	Fund	For	Amount
VSO	County General	Vehicles	\$4,000
New veteran's van			
VSO	Veterans Van Donations	Vehicles	\$10,115
New Veterans Van			

TRANSPO – Bryan mentioned that Council on Aging is requesting repairs to the TRANSPO building. He feels that there should be maintenance built into their budget. Amy Roe (Council on Aging Commissioner appointee) has stated that she found a lease agreement whereas the City of Rochester is the Lessor and County of Fulton is the Lessee. Bryan stated there was a request for the county to pay \$2,000 for gutters by Duane Border. Phyl Olinger reported that Andy Perkins was the attorney for Council on Aging at one time and wonders if he has any documentation. Bryan requests Holli deliver a letter to the City regarding the matter.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS – Rick announced that the Insurance Committee is having the property/casualty and health insurance quoted for 2022.

RECESS – Steve motioned to recess at 7:43 p.m., seconded by Rick; carries.