

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024

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The Jasper County Commissioners met this date at 8:30 A.M. C.S.T at 910 S. Sparling, Rensselaer, Indiana with the following members present: Rein Bontreger, James Walstra and Jeffrey DeYoung. Also present were Deputy Auditor, Treasure Gilbert, Deputy Auditor, Diana Boersma and Eric Beaver, the Attorney that represents the Commissioners. Those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Bontreger. There was a brief moment of silence following the Pledge.

MINUTES: Mr. Walstra motioned to approve the minutes from August 5, 2024, as presented, Mr. DeYoung seconded and the motion carried.

CLAIMS: Mr. DeYoung motioned to approve the claims, as presented, Mr. Walstra seconded and the motion carried.

PAYROLL CLAIMS: Mr. Walstra motioned to approve the payroll claims with checks dated August 15, 2024 and August 30, 2024, Mr. DeYoung seconded and the motion carried.

SURVEYOR / EXTENSION OFFICE SIGN: Mr. Bontreger said they had a project that was initiated with Commissioner Culp previously and has been a couple years in the making. He said Farm Bureau is going to upgrade their signage out by the Surveyor/Extension Office, which they made provisions to allow the Jasper County Extension/Surveyor sign location in their design. He said the sign will be internally lit and the cost will be \$9,485.97. He said this money will be sent back to Farm Bureau. Mr. Bontreger asked if there was a motion to approve this and showed the picture of the project to Mr. Walstra. Mr. DeYoung motioned to proceed, Mr. Bontreger said that if for some reason one of the departments relocated, those panels could be re-lettered, Mr. Walstra supported and the motion carried.

ANDY BOERSMA / FEE SCHEDULE: Mr. Bontreger said that Mr. Boersma was there to talk about a fee schedule and they are getting closer to it but, it will probably have to wait two weeks. Mr. Boersma said he didn't have anything new but, he wanted to try to get it ironed out. He said by the end of the month \$3,000.00 would be due, out of his budget that was approved, to pay the people it needs to go to. Mr. Bontreger asked Attorney Beaver if he thought he could have it ready to go in two weeks. Attorney Beaver said yes and he anticipated that there would probably be a bonus coming on the claims. Mr. Bontreger apologized for the delay and thanked Mr. Boersma for his patience. Mr. Boersma said he has been patient for 25 years waiting on a new building.

Mr. Bontreger asked Attorney Beaver if "RFPs" have been put out. Attorney Beaver said they are looking at two weeks to have an RFP to the Commissioners. Mr. Bontreger said that Councilman, Mr. Moore, would like to have a committee to oversee any capital projects they are looking at. Mr. Moore said maybe it was time to have a committee to oversee some of this stuff and help decide who they're going to hire for engineering and stuff. Mr. Bontreger said this is a discussion to have and a good idea to consider. Mr. Boersma said he likes the idea. He said Tecton put him in contact with a company called they've worked with called DLZ. He said he talked with them and in the process, the Sheriff stepped up and said he has Public Safety money they can use but, he wants to add something for the them to use to examine cars. He said they should include the Sheriff or one of his representatives on the committee.

Mr. Boersma said the architectural fees and design fees from this company would be around \$313,000.00. He said this is 7% of the hard cost and when they were looking at the papers they gave them, they were looking at 3.5-4.2 million and they are looking around 4.5 if the Sheriff wants to add his stuff in there. He said the building would be more universally used by the Coroner and Sheriff. He said they could also use the bay they want for the Health Department to park their trailer in for immunizations. Mr. Bontreger said the goal is to consider it a law enforcement facility and the special jail rate they kept active, funds purchasing or upkeeping law enforcement facilities so, they maybe draw up on that rate they have in play.

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TORI NUEST / ANIMAL CONTROL / SHED REPLACEMENT / SIGN REPLACEMENT / CAMERA SYSTEM / 2024 STATS: Ms. Nuest joined via Zoom. She went over some of Animal Control's stats as of August 15th:

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024 YTD</u>
Calls Per Service	151	185
Bites	51	55
Intakes	251	205
After Hours Call-Outs	24	27
Adoptions		85
Reclaims		80
Rescues		13
Euthanized		13
Microchipped/Returned to owner		14
Average time in the shelter	Cats-22 days	Dogs-10 days

Ms. Nuest said as you can see, they have a substantial amount of calls for service, bite cases and intakes that are weighing in on them. She said she also wanted to talk about their camera system. She said they used to use ADT but, they fell off at some point and she is interested in looking back into ADT to service the cameras that are already there and taking down the Arlo cameras. She said since they've not had the cameras rolling, they've had four animals dumped overnight with no leads. She said unfortunately, they had to euthanize two of them because, they were left suffering at the back door. She said they need to have some sort of security system in the office and outside the building so, she would like to go through ADT. Mr. Bontreger said he isn't opposed to the new cameras, as long as it goes through the proper channels of decision making; from the Animal Control Board recommending it to the Commissioners. He said if the new cameras will work and their board recommends it then, she can bring them the recommendation and he's sure they would approve it. He said if the cameras aren't going to work then, she can bring them a cost, if the board recommends ADT, and they can consider that. He said the main thing is to make sure she runs it through her board.

Mr. Bontreger asked Ms. Nuest if she knew why the trend was going up this year, referring to her stats. Ms. Nuest said that she wasn't 100% sure but, Starke County just got their animal control back, Pulaski doesn't have animal control and Newton County is veering towards not doing animal control. She said they are finding that a lot of the calls are just on the county line.

Mr. Bontreger asked what their needs were for the shed they are requesting. Ms. Nuest said this is in regards to their green shed and they need to get it fixed up. She said the mice are under control but, not the raccoons and opossums. She said there was a fox that tore up the back of the shed and now they have mold. She said they were approached by the Cub Scouts and Eagle Scouts and they wanted to see if there was any opportunity for an eco-project that they might be able to help raise funds for or reach out to local businesses or local contractors to see if they might be able to donate time and labor to alleviate some of the cost. She said her opinion is this shed is a little too far gone. She said they would like to use this as an adoption shed. She said they've had far too many animals escape out of the small adoption area in the front and with animals being left there overnight, they've destroyed the fencing. She said this is another reason why they need the camera system. Mr. Bontreger asked what size the shed is. Ms. Nuest said she wasn't sure, Mr. Moore said its around 10x25. Ms. Nuest said she doesn't think they need something that big but, they will need electric ran to it. Mr. Bontreger said they will take this under advisement and pick it back up at the next meeting.

Ms. Nuest also wanted to talk about their sign and asked if there were any plans to replace it. She said they still have people either going to EMS or Community Corrections even though their sign does say "entrance in the back" or "building in the back". Mr. Bontreger said they have tentative plans but, nothing necessarily to put out there right now. He said they will talk about this in two

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TORI NUEST / ANIMAL CONTROL CONTINUED: weeks as well. He said there is a sign out there but, it's smaller than the original one. He said they probably need something a little bit bigger but, they don't want to block visibility coming out of that drive. Mr. DeYoung asked if they could put a sign back behind EMS and Community Corrections that maybe says "keep driving forward".

CARMEN FORTNEY / REQUEST FOR NEW SHED: Ms. Fortney said they are losing some storage in the area they are sharing with the Surveyor's Office. She said she has an abundance of blocks in her office that are taking up a lot of space and she doesn't really do a lot of block parties. She said they belong to the County because, they were bought with a grant so, she technically can't get rid of them. She provided the Commissioners with a few quotes for a new shed. There was a 10x6 shed for about \$380.00 and she thought that is the smallest they should go. Mr. Urbano said they've been meaning to put some shelving up to help. Mr. Bontreger said his concern with putting a shed out there is with the wind. Mr. Urbano said there's a shed out there for the garden so, they could probably use that. Mr. Bontreger said it would be a good idea to follow through with the shelving and consider putting some of the stuff in the gardening shed.

EMS BUILDING WARRANTIES: Attorney Beaver said that when the EMS building was finished, one of the material providers was Chief Buildings. He said Chief provided four warranties of the materials that were used to construct the building and they need to be accepted by the owner, which is the Commissioners. He said he has reviewed them and they are pretty standard. He said he would propose an oral resolution to approve the warranties and authorize Mr. Bontreger to sign and e-sign the warranties. Mr. DeYoung motioned to approve Mr. Bontreger signing off on the EMS building warranties, Mr. Walstra seconded and the motion carried.

BRENDA DOLAN / WORKONE: Ms. Dolan, with WorkOne, said that that WorkOne and JobWorks offer a few programs to businesses and the community. She said she was there to talk about their work experience program. She said she works with 16-24-year old's and adults as well. She said she contacted the Animal Shelter for a young lady who is a veterinarian assistant. She said with the work experience program, they would go into the business and be paid by WorkOne. She said this is to help with their soft skills such as, showing up to work on time, dressing appropriately, doing what your told and staying off your phone. She said she is presenting this to see if it is something the Commissioners would consider.

Mr. Bontreger asked if this was specifically for Animal Control. Ms. Dolan said it could be for any business or organization. Mr. Bontreger asked what they would require of the Commissioners and what she is looking for this morning. Ms. Dolan said she was told she needed to present it to them. She said what they would do is present a resume and if they like them, they would work up a contract or agreement stating the start date, end date and how many hours and weeks they would work. She said she would check in with them every 30,60,90 days and it's usually for a month to three months. She said if everything goes great then, they have a chance to hire them if they would like. She said they could end it at any time and so could the client. Mr. DeYoung asked if WorkOne is paying the employee. Ms. Dolan said yes, they take on their pay, work comp and insurance. Mr. DeYoung asked if this is through the State. Ms. Dolan said yes, they are Federally funded.

Mr. Bontreger wanted to play out a hypothetical situation. He asked if they got somebody to work at Animal Control and they got bit, how it would be handled and if there is extra liability for the county. Ms. Dolan said WorkOne would take on all responsibility. Attorney Beaver said if workman's comp is being covered by WorkOne then, they could start the process with WorkOne and the department head finding a candidate then, have their agreement go to the Commissioners and approve the contract. Ms. Dolan provided Attorney Beaver with a sample agreement.

Mr. Bontreger asked if, pending legal review, the Commissioners would be open to allowing WorkOne to work with the department heads or HR to potentially take advantage of this opportunity. Mr. DeYoung said yes and with limited skilled labor, he would be interested in at

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BRENDA DOLAN / WORKONE CONTINUED: least trying the program to see how it goes. He asked if the employee could end it at any time; Ms. Dolan said yes, the employee or employer. Mr. DeYoung asked if the people come to WorkOne. Ms. Dolan said yes and they do have to enroll. She said the help with job leads, resumes and interview skills.

Mr. DeYoung made a motion, pending legal review to go ahead and try the WorkOne work experience program, Mr. Walstra seconded and the motion carried. Mr. Bontreger said the department heads can take the initiative to reach out to WorkOne and possibly for seasonal help. Ms. Dolan said they are more than willing to give it their best shot.

SHARON COLEE / ROOF LEAK / REQUEST TO INSTALL ELECTRICITY FOR NEW SIGN AT COMMUNITY SERVICES / SNOW SHOVELING: Ms. Colee provided the Commissioners with a packet. She said they had a bill from Hamstra for repairing a roof leak at the Rensselaer center for \$2,541.29. She said the building is getting older and they will be celebrating 50 years next year and 30 of those years were in that building.

Ms. Colee said they are excited about a digital sign project coming up that they got a grant for. She said they are going through Stewart Signs. She said the led sign at the DeMotte location has been a tremendous help and has increased awareness so, they would like to do the same in Rensselaer. She said the cost of the sign is \$11,197.95 and installation is \$5,200.00. She said this doesn't cover the cost to install the electric. She asked if the Commissioners could tell her who to call to install the electric and cover the cost, which she guessed would be around \$1,200.00. Mr. DeYoung was looking at the packet she handed out and pointed out that Stewart Signs doesn't do their own installation. Ms. Colee said they subcontract that out to Apex. Mr. DeYoung expressed his concerns about who is liable for damage to the sign. He joked that since Mayor Phillips was present that maybe he will allow them to run an extension cord from their light pole. Ms. Colee asked if she needed to contact someone or what direction they needed to go. Mr. Bontreger said if the City electric departments not able to complete the connection then, they would probably have her talk to Kevin Moore since he will be redoing their parking lot lights.

Mr. Walstra motioned to approve the roof repair for \$2,541.29, Mr. DeYoung seconded and the motion carried. Mr. DeYoung motioned to approve providing the electrical for the digital message sign, Mr. Walstra supported and the motion carried.

Ms. Colee said the County does the snow plowing for the Fase Senior Center and the Rensselaer Senior Center parking lots. She said they have minimal snow removal needed in front of the door at the Rensselaer Center but, the Fase Center goes all the way around the building. She said in the past the staff has taken care of it but, they are female employees that have aged and are no longer able to do it. She said she wasn't sure who to contact for this because, they don't have the equipment, other than shovels, and the maintenance person is older as well. She said she talked to Mr. Boersma about who takes care of the Sheriff's Annex and he said the Sheriff does. She said she has to be careful with liability because, there's a lot of the seniors that want to try to help. She said the county currently plows the parking lots but, not the sidewalks Mr. Walstra suggested looking for bids. Mr. DeYoung suggested tabling this for two weeks while he looks into it. He said if they went for bids then, the snow removal company would probably want to do the parking lot as well.

EDP RENEWABLES: Mr. Bontreger said they originally had EDP on the agenda to discuss a road-use agreement but, they are going to push it back two weeks. Attorney Beaver said they have an agreement on the revision of the RUA and they want to add new mileage. He said once they have this, they'll have the Highway, Surveyor and BF&S review it for additional tiles, culverts and section corners. He said BF&S will also go on site to do some review this week to look at the differences in the culvert inventory of each side. Mr. Bontreger said construction compliance has been working quite nicely. He said he is glad they have it in place and its definitely the way to go with any of their larger projects going forward.

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OTHER BUSINESS

GROWING PATCH LEARNING CENTER/ QUENTEN OVERBECK / CHYANNE HESSON:

Growing Patch Learning Center Board President, Mr. Overbeck, said they are the only level four paths to quality childhood education center licensed in Jasper County. He said they started GPLC upon the closing of the Families of JCYC, which was the only State licensed childcare center in Jasper County at the time. He said they opened with the belief that their children's peers deserve the same level of childcare and access to what their kids had experienced at the Families of JCYC. He said they believe that the community as a whole would be better, both socially and economically if they had this sort of service in their town. He said they operated independently for several years until 2019, at which point their director announced her intent to leave. He said fortunately, they were introduced to Right Steps, who is their current operator.

Mr. Overbeck went over their financial state. He said it is very complicated, financially, to be a childcare provider under the State accreditation because, they are not able to charge enough to our community members to cover their expenses. He said they lose approximately \$4,000 a seat. He said they've been able to stay open through community support. He said previously, the Commissioners had not shown much interest in supporting this type of program. He said he would like to thank them for changing that trend through County support. He said they have a strong passion for Remington and their community and he believes services like this are 100% necessary to build the community economically and socially. He thanked the Commissioners and Council for their support in programs like this. He then turned it over to Ms. Hesson.

GPLC Director, Ms. Hesson, said she has been with them since 2018 where she started as a Lead Teacher then, worked her way up to the Assistant Director and she is now the Director as of December 2023. She said in that amount of time she has got them to be national accredited by NAEYC. She said the national accreditation means that they hold high quality for children. She said they do a high-quality curriculum, teaching them and assessing their health. She said they also hold above 50% for their staff qualifications. She said they are children's first learners from 0 to 5 and they get them ready for kindergarten. She said they have five classrooms; six weeks to six years old. She said they currently have 64 seats but, they are full. She said they have nineteen students on their wait list; eight of which are babies. She said they have twelve students on CCD vouchers and two on "on my way" vouchers, which come from State funding for low income families. She also said they have eighteen full-time staff members, ten of which use the teach funding to receive higher education.

Ms. Hesson said they also partner with Jacob's Ladder to screen students as they enter their building to make sure they meet their milestones. She said if they are not meeting milestones, they reach out to First Steps and then, Cooperative School Services for Jasper County to help them with the next steps so that their students are getting the services they need. Mr. Bontreger asked how this affects the workforce in the Remington area and how the need affects local employers. Ms. Hesson said if they didn't have this center, the parents would have to travel much farther for childcare. Mr. Bontreger asked if they've had consistent staffing. Ms. Hesson said they have had consistent staffing but before, they did have a lot of turnover. She said raising the pay has helped plus, they get a childcare discount. Mr. Bontreger asked how it has been working with Right Steps. Mr. Overbeck said it has been huge for them to train and implement directors, as well as grant writers. He said they bring a lot to their table that their board didn't have so, it has been a good relationship.

Mr. Bontreger said they are at capacity so, he asked if there would ever be, aside from getting a large grant, a possibility to expand. Mr. Overbeck said Ms. Hesson asks this a lot. He said a lot of the regulation is surrounding one staff member per child and a lot of it comes down to restrooms. He said the facility was laid out as religiously based, which has different requirements. He said if they had the money, they would love to expand. Mr. Bontreger said they appreciate the work they are doing. Mr. Overbeck said they appreciate the support. Mr. DeYoung thanked them as well.

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT BIDS: Mr. Kennell, with Tecton, said they should have received Tecton's recommendation letter and bid summary sheet from the bids they received on August 16th. He said they recommended all the low bidders and all three alternates. He said with approval, they would like to start construction sometime mid-October to late-October. Mr. Bontreger said he was pleased, Mr. DeYoung said he was too. Mr. Kennell said the numbers were good. Mr. DeYoung motioned to approve Mr. Bontreger signing the recommendation letter from Tecton, on behalf of the Commissioners, Mr. Walstra supported and the motion carried.

Ms. Louck said she wanted to talk to them about cleaning out the kitchen. She asked if they wanted all of the stuff taken to the County auction, as she's already spoken to the Highway Department about getting it all moved out. She said they will come move it whenever she gets permission. She said there is a safe in the hallway and the Coroner was wanting that. Mr. Bontreger asked if the stuff was worth more than scrapping it. Mr. DeYoung said they had looked into reusing some of the stuff but, he doesn't think its worth more than scrapping. Mr. Urbano said they could throw the stuff on a trailer and they could take it. Mr. Bontreger asked if they get it scrapped and they get a check, if they take it to the Auditor's Office. Attorney Beaver said yes because, they would need to keep track of any capital assets that are on hand and have a record of which items were disposed of. He said he assumes the money would go back into the General Fund. He said he would look to see if there is a statute about disposing of surplus property below a certain value. Mr. Bontreger said he would entertain a motion, pending legal review and a basic inventory list, to scrap the kitchen items. Mr. DeYoung motioned to approve, Mr. Walstra supported and the motion carried. Ms. Louck asked if she could just let the Coroner take the safe. Mr. Bontreger said yes.

BRIAN MOORE: Councilman, Mr. Moore, asked if anyone else in the county could utilize the kitchen items before they scrap it. Mr. DeYoung said they tried to give it away and it has been out there for six months. Mr. Moore said they just spent a bunch of money on Community Correction's kitchen. Mr. DeYoung said none of this would work for them. Mr. Bontreger said they explored, in depth, the possibility of using it and he is more than welcome to take a look at it. Mr. Moore said he just wanted to throw it out there. He also asked for clarification on the grant for the Community Service's sign. Mr. Bontreger said the grant would not cover the electrical hookup. He also expressed his concern about working with WorkOne and obligations to keep the employees. Mr. Bontreger said he didn't think there was any obligation to keep them.

ANDY BOERSMA / BUILDING COMMITTEE: Mr. Boersma said if they are going to get a [building] committee together before the end of the year, he would like to see one of the two gentlemen coming in on that committee.

JIM WALSTRA / FUEL COSTS: Mr. Walstra said that they locked in another six months for gas at \$3.04, which is down 36 cents and diesel fuel at \$2.90, which is down 6 cents. Mr. Bontreger thanked him for taking care of that at Keystone.

REIN BONTREGER / SPRAY FOAM BID FOR HIGHWAY BARN: Mr. Bontreger said they had a quote for spray foam on the interior of the building they are looking to upgrade for the Surveyor, Highway and Maintenance. He said one quote was \$22,904.00 and the other was for a thicker foam for \$34,356.00. Mr. Bontreger said they don't need to make a decision today and they can take it under advisement. He said he also asked this vendor for a quote on an external surface coating because, Mr. Urbano noticed a few leaks.

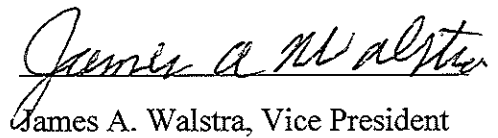
There being no further business, Mr. Walstra moved to continue the meeting to Monday, September 16, 2024 at 8:30 A.M. C.S.T., Mr. DeYoung seconded and the motion carried.

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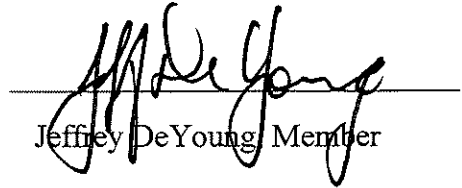
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Rein Bontreger, President




James A. Walstra, Vice President



Jeffrey DeYoung, Member

ATTEST:


Donya G. Jordan, Auditor of Jasper County