

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING: AUGUST 21, 2023

The Howard County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, August 21, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. in Hearing Room 338 of the Howard County Administration Center. Those in attendance included President Brad Bray, Vice President Jack Dodd, Member Jeff Lipinski, County Attorney Alan Wilson, and Auditor Jessica Secrease.

The meeting was called to order by Sheriff Jerry Asher and conducted by President Brad Bray. President Bray led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Lipinski offered a word of prayer.

IN THE MATTER OF APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of the August 7, 2023, regular meeting, having been previously submitted and reviewed, were approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski, Commissioner Dodd seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF DEPARTMENTAL BUSINESS & REPORTS:

MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

Kitchen Drain Repair at Kinsey Youth Center

Maintenance Superintendent Bill Stonestreet submitted a quote to repair the kitchen drain at the Kinsey Youth Center from Quality Plumbing and Heating in the amount of \$15,341.00. Mr. Stonestreet requested to pay this from the Cumulative Capital Development Fund's Building Repair Account (line item 1138.47241.000.0000). A motion was made by Commissioner Dodd to approve the quote to repair the water kitchen drain at the Kinsey Youth Center from Quality Plumbing and Heating in the amount of \$15,341.00 and for it to be paid out of the Cumulative Capital Development Fund's Building Repair Account (line item 1138.47241.000.0000) as presented. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

Brine Storage Purchase

Highway Superintendent Amber Tolle requested permission to purchase a 10,000-gallon double walled brine storage tank. Three different companies submitted quotes, and the winning bid went to Agro Chem totaling \$52,050.00. The Highway Department has this money in their equipment account. The invoice for the brine storage tank was submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dodd, and the motion carried.

Bridge 46 Consultant Contract

Highway Superintendent Amber Tolle presented the Commissioners with an LPA Consulting Contract for Bridge 46 in Cassville. The winning consultant was USI with their bid not to exceed \$487,650.00. The LPA USI Consulting Contract was submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dodd, and the motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF NEW BUSINESS:

Hoosier Heartland ISBDC Update

Jordan Jicha, Director of Hoosier Heartland Indiana Small Business Development Center (ISBDC), presented an update to the Commissioners. Mr. Jicha is the director of the local small business development center that covers 12 counties in the state of Indiana. They provide no cost business consulting to small business owners. This year, the ISBDC has helped start 21 new businesses in Kokomo and has invested close to \$4,000,000.00 in capital.

Well Protection

Resident Brad Semon presented the Commissioners with some information from the EPA on well testing. Per the information Mr. Semon submitted, the EPA states that wells should be tested at least once a year. Mr. Semon stated that it will cost around \$1,000.00 to test his well each year. Mr. Semon wanted to know if the current ordinance will include anything mentioning a scenario in which a well can become contaminated and how it would be rectified. Commissioner Dodd asked Mr. Semon how many times he had tested his well since living at his residence. Mr. Semon answered that he had a handful of times. Commissioner Dodd stated that the ordinance says the well will be tested prior to construction and after the construction. Mr. Semon stated that the testing is just for damages but does not cover if the well was contaminated. Mr. Dodd's concern is for damages to the well. Mr. Semon stated that he is concerned with chemicals getting into his well. Mr. Semon stated that Commissioner Dodd and himself are concerned about two completely different things when it comes to well testing. He went on to explain that he does not believe that ordinance is very strong yet. Mr. Dodd states that the good neighbor agreement includes well testing. Mr. Semon stated that he does not get the good neighbor agreement or bribe money. Mr. Semon asked if the Health Department and the environmental agency were contacted when the ordinance was written, and, if so, he would like to see the documentation. Mr. Semon stated that he is trying to do his due diligence to protect his well as well as his neighbors'.

IN THE MATTER OF CLAIMS AND REPORTS:

Howard County Auditor Jessica Secrease submitted the following claims and reports for the Commissioners' information and approval:

1. **Salary Claims:** The Commissioners' Salary, Hourly, and Overtime Claims for payment on August 11, 2023, in the amount of \$965,182.63 was submitted and approved on a motion made by Commissioner Dodd. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
2. **Payroll Expenses:** The Commissioners' Payroll Expenses for payment on August 11, 2023, in the amount of \$965,182.63 was submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Dodd. Commissioner Lipinski seconded the motion, and the motion carried.
3. **Operating Claims:** The Commissioners' Operating Claims to be paid August 21, 2023, in the amount of \$1,106,875.98 was submitted and approved as presented on a motion made by Commissioner Dodd. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lipinski, and the motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF ATTORNEY ISSUES:

Meijer Opioid Budget Estimate

County Attorney Alan Wilson presented the Form 1 to appropriate the funds from the Meijer Opioid Settlement that Commissioner Bray signed. The ratifying of Commissioner President Bray's signature on the Form 1 was approved on a motion made by Commissioner Lipinski. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dodd, and the motion carried.

IN THE MATTER OF COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Dodd thanked the Human Resources department for conducting the employee survey that was presented at the last Commissioners' Meeting. He stated that employee feedback is very important. There were some negative comments regarding compensation on the survey. Commissioner Dodd stated that the last two years the County has given the employees 5% raises. They have also lowered the insurance deductible to \$2,000.00 dollars and kept the insurance at the same rates the previous year. Commissioner Dodd stated that the County still has a long way to go, but the Commissioners and the Council are working together to do positive things for the employees. He would like to do a comprehensive compensation study on the County that would review job descriptions and salaries in the County and develop a pay plan. He stated that it will cost around \$30,000.00, but that it would be very helpful. Commissioner Dodd appreciates the feedback the survey gave. Commissioner Lipinski added that the County funds the Public Employee Retirement Fund (PERF) for each of the employees. Commissioner Lipinski also stated that the commissioners are working on some changes to the employee benefits for next year and hopes to announce them soon.

Cory Childs, President of Berry Comm, presented the Commissioners with an update on the fiber project in the County. BerryComm should have the entire project completed by the end of September. The company is trying to reach as many people as possible to let them know that fiber is available. There is \$80,000,000.00 from the State in grant dollars to apply for fiber projects. BerryComm is hoping to get some of that grant money for Howard County projects.

Randy Strasser announced that he is leaving VS Engineering. He stated that he has enjoyed working with the county. Ginny Munroe is taking his place.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Resident Jerry Paul of 1326 S Webster St., Kokomo, Indiana: Mr. Paul, who is the president of the Howard County Memorial Corporation, presented the Commissioners with a proposal to install a new monument on the Courthouse lawn. This memorial will be for Sergeant Opha May Johnson, who was the first ever woman Marine and also who was born in Kokomo, Indiana. The memorial consists of three walls as well as a bench. Howard County Memorial Corporation has already received support on this from Patronicity. They want to place it on the north west corner of the Courthouse lawn. Patronicity will match \$50,000.00 in grant money towards the project. Mr. Paul is requesting \$10,000.00 from the County to go towards the \$50,000.00 that they have to have in order to be matched. Once the monument is completed, it will be given to the County. Commissioner Dodd stated that Opha already had a monument at the American Legion, and he expressed that it was a nice one. Mr. Paul stated that the community can do better than the monument at the American Legion. Commissioner Lipinski made a motion to approve the monument being placed on the north west side of the Courthouse lawn; Commissioner Bray seconded the motion, and the motion carried. Commissioner Dodd did not vote. President Bray said they will vote on the monetary aspect at a later date. Mr. Paul stated that he would like to make the Courthouse lawn into a piece of art. He also requested that the Commissioners save the south west side of the Courthouse lawn for another project.

Dale Truax, Veterans' Services Officer of Howard County, gave the Commissioners information on Opha May Johnson. He stated that he was in favor of the Commissioners passing the monument project. He discussed the Marine Corps history and how it has impacted his life as a Marine. He stated that Peru has a monument for Opha and that Kokomo being the "City of Firsts" should have one for her as well. He wants his children to know what service to others is. Mr. Truax asked for all the Marines to stand in the room. He wants to honor Opha May Johnson with this memorial.

Chris Sailors from Elevatus Architecture introduced himself to the Commissioners. He stated that he used to be the Sheriff of Fulton County and also served on the Fulton County Council.

***There being no further business to come before the Board of Commissioners at this time
the meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m. on a motion made by Commissioner Dodd.
The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lipinski, and the motion carried.***

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

R. BRAD BRAY, PRESIDENT

JACK W. DODD, VICE PRESIDENT

JEFF S. LIPINSKI, MEMBER

ATTEST:

JESSICA SECREASE, AUDITOR

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