Martin

County

THE MARTIN COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

APRIL 4, 2023

MINUTES

The Martin County Commissioners convened in regular session Tuesday, April 4, 2023 in the Commissioners’ Room at the Courthouse located at 129 Main Street, Shoals, Indiana. Commissioners present were President Paul R. George, Commissioner Aaron Summers, and Commissioner Cody Roush. Also present were Attorney David Lett and Auditor Michelle Norris.

Meeting called to order with the Pledge to the Flag at 5:30 pm.

The minutes from the regular meeting of March 21, 2023 were approved with a motion made by Commissioner Roush, seconded by Commissioner Summers. All in favor, the motion passed.

The Claims and Allowance were approved with the motion by Commissioner Summers, seconded by Commissioner Roush. All in favor, the motion passed.

**RE: VETERANS AFFAIRS UPDATES**

Veterans Services Officer, Jonathan Cropp, came before the Commissioners to give a report of services for March. VSO Cropp stated he has cleaned the van inside and out and put new signage on the outside of the van. There are now 14 volunteer drivers for the veterans and there have been no issues getting veterans transported. VSO Cropp had to get the van’s oil changed at Wal-Mart on a Sunday and he would like to donate that oil change to the County. He would have preferred for the service to stay within the County but the change was thousands of miles overdue.

VSO Cropp stated he and Ms. Kim Showalter have been working diligently to get the office back up and running. He believes they grossly underestimated the backlog of veterans needing assistance. He and Ms. Showalter are assisting the veterans as fast as possible. There are systems in place that can help with this, such as Vetrospec, which the regional service officer directed the department to use. This system comes at no cost to the County. VSO Cropp and Ms. Showalter are both certified by the Veteran’s Administration, which was paid for by the State.

VSO Cropp stated he has found out that many of Martin County’s veterans are returning to the County for service. He has found most veterans have been going to other counties, the department is trying to bring these veterans back home. Service should be provided by Martin County, not by other counties. The Veterans Services Facebook page is now live and updates will be posted regarding updates in the County and there will be links to services through the Veterans Administration.

**RE: HIGHWAY UPDATES**

Highway Superintendent Scott Seals gave report to the Commissioners regarding the Highway Department. The department would like to go back to four ten-hour days starting Monday April 10th, which the Commissioners approved. Superintendent Seals asked if he could obtain grader quotes. Both graders are around fifteen years old. The Commissioners asked Superintendent Seals to obtain quotes.

Superintendent Seals stated he had a citizen question him regarding bridge #44. Attorney David Lett stated he is having ongoing discussions with the insurance adjuster trying to see if he can persuade him in regards to the historical consequences and expense of what is needed to fix the bridge. Attorney Lett stated he will try one more time to talk to the adjuster but will then have to start litigation.

Superintendent Seals hopes to have information regarding the 2023 Community Crossings Matching Grant by the end of April. The equipment is running well for the most part. The department has been patching holes the best they can, but the department is short on manpower. The department is down two positions, an operator and a mechanic are needed. CDL is preferred, but the department might be willing to train for the right people.

Superintendent Seals did receive quotes for pads for a Highway 450 emergency only run around. The quote was from $300,000-$496,000 to rent the pads and the pads are no longer good after one year.

**RE: AMBULANCE UPDATES**

Ambulance Director, Jeramey Osborn, presented to the Commissioners the run report for March. There were 298 runs for 2023, with 52 of those being in March. If standbys and disregards are removed, the transport rate is 86%. Of the 52 transports, there were 37 transported to Jasper Memorial Hospital and 12 transported Daviess Community Hospital. As of April 3, there has been $45,678.55 collected in ambulance revenue. Over the last three months the operating costs have been under $65,000, which is about $780,000 per year. The estimated budgeted amount was $1.2 million but Director Osborn estimates the needed budget will be around $780,000. Director Osborn cautions there will be a need to save for another ambulance or other capital expenses. President George stated it will be about six months before a real estimate of costs and revenues can be obtained.

Director Osborn stated he is receiving calls from patients in regards to their bills. The phone number for ambulance billing is 1-800-280-5974, option 3, and ask for Martin County Ambulance Service Billing. This information is also available on the County’s website.

**RE: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT UPDATES**

EMA Director Monty Wolf stated there is a possibility of bad weather tomorrow afternoon. The County dodged severe storms last week. EMA Deputy Director Andy Ringwald has been working on the EMA building, putting fill dirt at the back of the building. April is Martin County’s month to host the District 10 EMA directors, which will be hosted at Crane Naval Base. There was a District 10 meeting in Lynnville last week which they attended.

Attorney Lett asked if there would be a weather spotters class this year. Deputy Director Ringwald stated he has not approached the weather service, but he can. The class has not been pushed by the weather service since the onset of COVID.

**RE: USPS AND RIGHT OF WAY**

Loogootee USPS Steward, Amanda Baker, came before the Commissioners regarding an issue with a cul-de-sac on Bellbrook Avenue not being properly sized. USPS is not able to access the mail boxes on the cul-de-sac. Ms. Baker went to the Loogootee City Council before coming to the Commissioners and it was determined this was a County road. President George asked how long the road has been there. Ms. Baker responded the road as been there for a long while, but over time the cul-de-sac has gotten overgrown by the yards due to the road just being gravel.

There has been a property owner who has put up stakes, possibly on the County right of way. Ms. Baker stated the right of way states that fifty feet of that yard is available for the County to access or utilize. Ms. Baker stated she only needs about two feet which would ensure the property owners would not lose the mailbox locations or lose access to the road. Ms. Baker stated she has tried to several months to solve the issue and it is getting to the point she is not going to be able to go down the road at all. There are four mailboxes down this road that will not get mail or they will have to move the boxes. President George asked Attorney Lett to contact Surveyor Nathan Hoffman to survey and determine right of way.

**RE: LAND BANK BOARD REPRESENTATIVE**

Attorney Lett stated because the County is involved in the regional land bank, the Commissioners need to appoint a Martin County representative to the land bank board. Attorney Lett stated there are two other counties using their economic development director. Attorney Lett contacted Jessica Potts, who is Martin County’s economic development director. Ms. Potts indicated she would be willing to take the position. A motion was made by Commissioner Roush to approve Jessica Potts as representative to the land bank board, seconded by Commissioner Summers. All in favor, motion passed.

**RE: HIGHWAY 450 CLOSURE UPDATES**

Attorney Lett stated there is an informational meeting scheduled tomorrow with the Commissioners and a representative from INDOT to discuss State Road 450. Commissioner Roush stated he was contacted by Indiana State Representative, Shane Lindauer, and was told the State Police out of Bloomington will patrol the northern part of the County. Commissioner Roush asked if EMA had contacted Indian Creek fire department. EMA Deputy Ringwald stated Indian Creek normally gets paged to those areas anyway and there will not be a change for them.

President George stated it has been mentioned in the public that the Army Core of Engineers can bring a bridge and set it across where Boom-Boom bridge was. They most likely could, but there is a quarter to a half a mile of road which would have to be created. Gravel could not be thrown on the area and be acceptable for traffic. At the first rain the gravel would be gone. There are also no guardrails in the area. There are some saying the Commissioner are not doing anything about the closure, but there is nothing the Commissioners can do.

Taxpayer Mary Smith asked if the Commissioners could confirm that there were five letters sent in regards to the bridge replacement. President George stated he could not confirm the letters were sent. Attorney Lett stated in documentation in regards to the 450 project, INDOT made the statement those letters were sent. There were five organizations and no one recalls receiving the letters. These were supposedly sent during the COVID period and the Commissioners still had meetings every other Tuesday. President George stated he does not believe the letter was oversighted. The Commissioners have received other letters in regards to 150, from the Loogootee intersection, and other closure letters to which the Commissioners reply. If they had been asked about a detour, they would respond there is not one in the County.

President George stated he was asked by State Representative Lindauer how bad the flooding was on 450. President George responded that in the past the flooding has been a lot worse, but President George only remembers the road flooding 1-2 times in the last three years. It is too late to stop the road work. Attorney Lett stated fixing the road has been requested by people in Martin County for the last thirty years.

**RE: COUNTY WEBSITE**

Attorney Lett stated the County’s new website looks great. Auditor Norris stated it is still a work in progress, but she is happy with the outcome.

**RE: COURTHOUSE SECURITY UPDATES**

Auditor Norris stated Judge Wright-Ryan had sent a quote for new cameras, router, and TVs to update the courthouse security system. This quote from Area One Protection is for both floors of the Courthouse. The current system is over twelve years old. Attorney Lett stated there could be grant money available from the Court Administration Office. The Commissioners tabled the issue until the next meeting so the Auditor could determine if there were grants available for the purchase.

**RE: AUDITOR UPDATES**

Auditor Norris stated there is $199,000 left in the ARPA fund. Auditor Norris stated Sheriff Josh Greene had mentioned that payment is due on the recently delivered F250s. Payment is usually presented to the dealership upon delivery of the trucks. A motion was made by Commissioner Summers for the Auditor’s office to cut the check to the dealership for the two F250s with the proper invoice and voucher, seconded by Commissioner Roush. All in favor, motion passed.

**RE: SHERIFF UPDATES**

President George stated Sheriff Josh Greene could not be present at the meeting, but he had received an update from the Sheriff. Sheriff Greene stated there are currently 82 inmates with 35 of those being from Vigo County. The freezer project is almost done and should be running tomorrow. The dishwasher/sanitizer in the Jail is unrepairable. A motion was made by Commissioner Roush for the Sheriff to obtain quotes for a replacement dishwasher/sanitizer, seconded by Commissioner Summers. All in favor, motion passed.

The Courthouse will be closed on Friday April 7 for Good Friday.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 pm with a motion made by Commissioner Roush and seconded by Commissioner Summers. All were in favor and the motion passed. The next Commissioner meeting will be held Tuesday, April 18, 2023 @ 5:30 pm.

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Paul R. George

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Aaron C. Summers

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J. Cody Roush

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Michelle Norris, Martin County Auditor