

**NOBLE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**MONDAY March 7, 2022**  
**1:00pm NOBLE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT**  
**NOBLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

Present:

Jerry Jansen  
Mary Wysong  
Denise Lemmon  
Tom Janes  
George Bennett  
Doug Harp  
Bernie Lawson

ALSO, PRESENT:

Jacqueline Knafel, County Coordinator  
Dennis Graft, Noble County Attorney  
Steve Garbacz, KPC Media  
Zack Smith, Highway Engineer  
Richard Rogers, Highway Superintendent

Denise Lemmon, Council President, called the meeting to order at approximately 1:00PM.

\* CORRESPONDENCE

- Notice from IDOT about bridge repair and detour route
- Ben Castle has provided information concerning changes he would like to see occur for abatements such as a claw back as well as a No Appeal process during the life of the abatement. This was discussed with the council but more conversations will need to be had with cities and towns to fully implement this process.

MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as written with a motion from George Bennett and a second from Mary Wysong. Motion carried 7-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were meetings scheduled for reporting.

APPOINTMENTS

In a conversation between Denise Lemmon and Mayor Susanne Handshoe there was a need to appoint a board member to the Kendallville EDC. Jerry Jansen moved to reappoint Jerry Kessler to sit on this board. Doug Harp seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

West Lakes - A letter of request has been received from the West Lakes Regional Sewer District for appointments to their board. Doug Harp moved to appoint Charlene Bock and Robert Kyser to sit on this board effective January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024. Tom Janes seconded and motion carried 7-0.

HIGHWAY

Richard Rogers, Highway Superintendent, had the following report for the council

- With the thaw and rain, the crews have been out on the gravel roads doing some grading.
- Brush cutting continues
- The crews have started the process on some culvert replacements
- Richard reported that there are still a few places with high water due to the snow melt and rain events that we have had, but in most cases, there are no issues.

Zack Smith, Highway Engineer, had the following engineering business to bring before the council:

- The Buggy Ordinance is out for advertisement and will be on the commissioner's agenda for their next meeting for adoption.
- Zack report that the Highway department is closing out their 2021 year and reported that all funds were in the black at the end of the year.
- Fuel prices are out of control at this point and so the department will not contract any fuel until the market steadies.
- Zack reported that crude oil was at a 10-year high and was unsure if that would affect the price of asphalt material.
- Community Crossing contract with Pulver's – Zack is waiting on the Notice to Proceed from the state.
- Community Crossing 2022 cycle - the projects have been submitted and the county is waiting to hear if we received the award.
- LPA Projects – there are 9 projects now in place and Zack is reporting that all are proceeding on schedule.
- LPA Projects NEW – Zack has submitted 3 more projects for upcoming LPA projects and hoping to hear sometime yet this month if those have been awarded. Those projects are Baseline Road, Riley Road and Bridge 59.

#### COUNTY ANNEX

Zack Smith, Project Manager, reported that the majority of the items are taken care of at the new annex. Furniture has been ordered, Appliances have been ordered and most items now are simply punch list items. The county is to take possession May 11, 2022 and Zack is hoping to have a ribbon cutting/open house set for May 13, 2022. Move ins will be done in phases.

#### COURTHOUSE RENOVATION

American StructurePoint had one last walk through for the initial scope of the project. Once this is received – talks with the office holders will begin to make sure that their needs are being met.

#### EXTENSION

Jan Cunningham, Program Assistant, was present in the absence of Ann Kline who was home ill. The department wanted to update the council on the things that are happening at the Extension office.

- Jan suggested that all follow the extension office on social media as there is a lot of information on Facebook, twitter etc....
- Abigail at office has a \$10,000.00 grant that she will be using to teach cooking classes to low-income families. At the end of the sessions, groceries for that meal will be sent home with each family.
- Focusing on Women in Agriculture – the department has had various programs such as estate planning, fire protection etc. to name a few.
- The Master Gardeners are again active and have projects in place
- The extension office will be participating in Noble Palooza this week-end
- 4-H enrollment stands at a little over 300 at present.

The department is wanting to hire a part time employee to work during fair week. Jan indicated that there is money in the budget to do so and with that Tom Janes moved to approve the part time help. Bernie Lawson seconded and the motion carried 7-0.

#### LEGISLATION

Denise Lemmon brought up an article about the personal property tax. There is legislation to lower the amount of personal property taxes businesses are paying. The question is – where will the replacement dollars come from? The council discussed this and it was also brought up that there might need to be a revision to the council's abatement schedule if such a law passes. The council members will keep an eye on this legislation and possibly reach out to the representatives.

#### SHERIFF

Max Weber, Noble County Sheriff, was present to answer any questions that the council members had in considering the CCD claims. Max indicated that most all of the expenses had to do with plumbing issues. The following claims were approved for payment from the CCD fund:

1. Equiparts \$2,027.31

2. Commercial Filter Service \$229.24

Claims totaled \$2,256.55 and were approved with a motion from Doug Harp and a second from Jerry Jansen. Motion carried 7-0.

Max reported that the department has been averaging 180 inmates. The jail has lost their bread vendor and are working with the local grocery store for this need. The department has hired two new deputies – one who is a current jailer – Austin Lash and Nick Dubea who worked for the Town of LaGrange. He comes with a K-9 and a vehicle to the department. Max reported that they are currently 6 short on jailers – they have some applications.

#### REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Gary Gatman, EDC Director, was present to discuss the county's membership in the Regional Partnership. This is a 11-county coalition and includes cities and towns within those counties. Representatives from the partnership were on hand as well and indicated that there is the possibility of \$50 million dollars that could come to this area. Applications will be submitted to the partnership and awarded based on the need of the communities. You must be a member to be a recipient. A draft resolution will be sent to Gary Gatman who will then get it on to the council for their consideration. Our current membership is due to expire in 2023.

#### ABATEMENT

Kerry Leitch, a representative from B & J Specialty was present to request an abatement for new equipment. This is a Precision Surface Grinding Machine at a cost of \$263,450.00. This would also add one new employee to the company. According to guidelines of the council abatements this would allow a 3-year abatement. Doug Harp moved to approve the abatement for a 3-year period in the amount of \$263,450.00. Tom Janes seconded the motion and motion carried 7-0.

#### COMPLIANCE VISITS

Gary is asking for a list of county council abatements to set up appointments for compliance visits. Jackie will provide this information to Gary.

#### ABATEMENT

Color Master located at 400E and State Road 6 is also expanding their operation and is requesting a personal property abatement. This company will be adding a new line and adding 9 new jobs at around \$40,000.00 to start. This abatement will add \$1,688,632.00 in new equipment and will be eligible for a 5-year abatement. Motion to approve this abatement came from Jerry Jansen and was seconded by Doug Harp. Motion carried 7-0.

#### HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Anne Lowe, Health Nurse, along with the Health Officer and Tina Lough, Office Manager, came before the council to request new employees. They would like to add a full-time medical person to their staff to help with case management for blood levels dealing with lead. Currently the level is set at 10 and the county has about 7 cases. The state is lowering that level to 5 and this will bring more cases that will have to be monitored. They have a current part-time employee that they would like to make full-time. She is currently a CMA but would like to continue her education. This is going to require a new job description addressing the levels such as CMA, LPN, RN which will need to be factored by the factoring committee before a wage can be determined.

Also, there is a 2-year grant that the health department would like to apply for. This is \$220,000.00 each year and will provide for a part-time RN to work with school nurses in getting children vaccinated and back on schedule. Covid 19 delayed a lot of these practices and therefore it will take a lot of "catching up" to get kids back on track. Without vaccines, the department is indicating that it leaves us all vulnerable for outbreaks of many diseases. Jerry Jansen moved to approve the hiring of a part-time nurse for this purpose pending approval of the commissioners to proceed with the grant. Tom Janes seconded and motion carried 7-0.

#### TRANSFER

Superior Court I is requesting a transfer of funds from 1000-14713-038 Mediation in the amount of \$2,500.00 into 1000-31202-038 Physicians. Motion to approve the transfer came from Mary Wysong and was seconded by Jerry Jansen. Motion carried 7-0.

ADDITIONALS

Adult Probation is requesting an additional for account 2000-34200-106 in the amount of \$8,500.00. this was overlooked at budget time and is needed to pay the liability insurance for their department. Motion to approve the additional came from Jerry Jansen and was seconded by George Bennett.

Motion carried 7-0

Superior Court II is also requesting an additional for their physicians account 1000-31202-039 in the amount of \$525.00. Motion to approve this came from Jerry Jansen and was seconded by Mary Wysong. Motion carried 7-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Noble County Council, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:50PM until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council being Monday April 4, 2022.

Dated this 4th day of April, 2022

Bernie Lawson

Bernie Lawson

ABSENT

Jerry Jansen

ABSENT

Mary Wysong

Denise Lemmon

Denise Lemmon

Tom Janes

Tom Janes

[Signature]

George Bennett

Doug Harp

Doug Harp

ATTEST: Tonya L Jones

Tonya L Jones, Noble County Auditor