

NOBLE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, March 4, 2024 1:00 PM
NOBLE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
NOBLE COUNTY NEW ANNEX

PRESENT:

George Bennett
Tom Janes
Brandon Chordas
Max Franklin
Mary Wysong

ABSENT:

Doug Harp
Trey Forbes

ALSO PRESENT:

Jackie Knafel, Noble County Coordinator
Gary Leatherman, Noble County Commissioners

George Bennett, Council President, brought the meeting to order at approximately 1:00 pm

CORRESPONDENCE

- Bowen Center – Ribbon cutting ceremony for the Bowen Center 101 E Park Dr.

MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as corrected with a motion from Max Franklin. Tom Janes seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Max Franklin reported that he was not in attendance of the last Northeastern Center board meeting but go notification that the board was dealing with possibly unionization of some of the staff.

George Bennett reported that the plan commission board had recently approved the integration of the solar ordinance into the UDO. This will go to the commissioners at their March 25th meeting.

NOBLE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY APPT

A letter of request was received from the Noble County Public Library for a reappointment of Julia Petersen. Julia is finishing up her first term and would like to continue on. Brandon Chordas made the motion to reappoint Julia Petersen to a second term on the library board. Mary Wysong seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

NOBLE COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

An e-mail was received from Diann Scott requesting that the Noble County Council to appoint a replacement for Jeff Boyle, who has tendered his resignation due to health issues. The board is recommending Christopher Macias Padilla to replace Mr. Boyle. Tom Janes moved to appoint Mr. Padilla to the Noble County Park and Recreation Board. Mary Wysong seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

HIGHWAY

Zack Smith, Highway Engineer, has the following engineering update for the council:

- Zack provided a copy of the department's annual operational report and provided a brief overview of the highway funds.

- Community Crossing projects – Zack reported that the CCMG projects have been submitted and accepted by the state. Zack is hoping to hear by the end of the month if Noble County will be awarded any grant dollars.
- Bridge 136 – Construction has begun on this site. Zack provided pictures of the removal of the bridge and the move to the compost site for storage.
- 400 N – this project is about to get underway with meeting coming up this week.
- Bridge 44 – construction is planned to begin in July.

COURTHOUSE RENOVATION

- PR 1 has many changes but a net cost change of 0.
- PR 2 changes were values at \$86009.64 that was zeroed out by using contingency.
- A breakdown narrative was provided by Weigand to better explain the above changes.
- Roofing – while a completely new roof may be needed 10 years down the road, the “fixes” that are planned will suffice until such time that a complete replacement can be done. Zack told the commissioners while the repair will be somewhat noticeable because the copper can not be matched, the repair will be adequate to prevent any leak issues in the future.

ASSESSOR

Ben Castle, Noble County Assessor, was present to discuss the “clawback” process for tax abatements. Ben had attended a class concerning this issue and wanted to share that information with the council. The Clawback would hold a company accountable for leaving the county prior to completion of the abatement years. This would require the company to pay back the taxes abated if they leave or do not fulfill their commitment to employment etc.... This could be unique to each company that applies for a tax abatement. Ben shared some literature with the council as well as a presentation that was made to the county assessors. Also discussed was the issue of companies getting grants or government subsidies for projects such as renewable energy. If they are getting this type of credits or help at a state or federal level, should the council be granting a tax abatement on top of that?

PROSECUTOR

Jim Mowery, Noble County Prosecutor, came before the council to discuss a change in his department, making his one deputy prosecutor in charge of the Sexual Assault Team as well as the vet court and drug court. Three of the other deputy prosecutors will also be reporting to her. Megan Packet works a flex schedule with 7 “segments” in the office and 3 “segments” working from home. Jim is asking that she receive 90% of the pay that the state pays Erik Murray, who is over the child support division of the prosecutor’s office. Motion to increase the pay of Megan Packer to the 90% range of the state paid prosecutor Erik Murray came from Brandon Chordas. Max Franklin seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

ABATEMENT

Melanie Kellogg along with a representative from IGS Energy, the company working with MD Kimmel Biogas to install a digester system on the Metzger farm in Noble County to produce natural gas from cattle manure, are present to request an abatement. There was a lot of discussion about the process and the company. Given light of the earlier discussion about abatements and the years of the abatement schedule, the council felt it necessary to continue this discussion and possibly make a decision at their next meeting. Tom Janes moved to continue this issue to the April 1, 2024 meeting. Max Franklin seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Tina Lough, Melayna Borg and Carrie Ryan from the Health department were all present to discuss the budget for the Health 1st Indiana grant. Melayna, Health1st Coordinator, provided the budget, the mission statement and the goal of this grant. Melayna explained that the goal for year one of the plan was to gather information, gather supplies, etc to find out exactly the needs of the community and partner with other agencies to make sure that the needs of the community are being met. The budget was reviewed by the council members and then approved with a motion from Tom Janes and a second from Brandon Chordas. Motion carried 5-0.

Brandon Chordas left the meeting prior to the Sheriff's business.

SHERIFF

- Max Weber, Noble County Sheriff, was on hand to request that a claim for Equiparts in the amount of \$95.44 be paid from the CCD Fund. Mary Wysong moved to approve the claim and Max Franklin seconded. Motion carried 4-0.
- Max reported 192 inmates for this morning's count.
- When asked about staffing, Max reported that Joe Hutsell retired at the end of February. Shafter Baker – a current sheriff deputy – will be replacing Joe as a detective. Jesse Lich, a current confinement officer, will move into the deputy position and that will leave an opening in the jail. Max reported that interviews are being done and hopefully this will result in the hiring of more confinement officers.
- Max also told the council that since Joe has decided NOT to take the security job, that he will not replace this position until the courthouse is complete – which looks to be another year out.

ADDITIONAL

There were two additional requested.

1. Statewide 911 is requesting \$26516.40 for radios and wireless mics.
2. Auditor – is requesting \$3625.05 for Peterson Consulting for the capital assets work

Both additional were approved with a motion from Mary Wysong and a second from Max Franklin. Motion carried 4-0.

TRANSFER

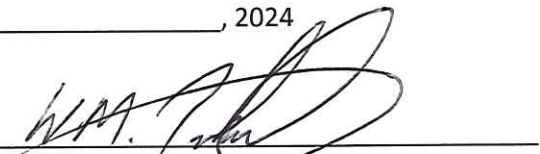
Superior Court I is requesting a transfer from 1000-31202-038 Physicians in the amount of \$10,000.00 going into 1000-14700-038 Petit Jurors. Tom Janes moved to approve the transfer. Mary Wysong seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Noble County Council, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:50 pm until the next regularly scheduled meeting of the council being April 1, 2024

Dated this 1 day of April, 2024


Trey Forbes

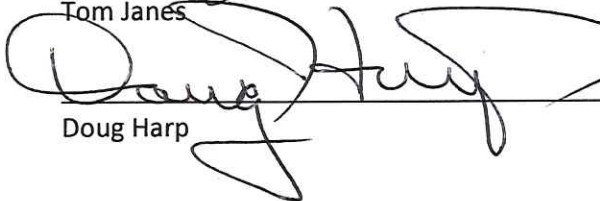

Max Franklin


Mary Wysong


Brandon Chordas


Tom Janes


George Bennett


Doug Harp

ATTEST: Michelle Mawhorter
Michelle Mawhorter, Noble County Auditor