

MINUTES
FOUNTAIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
February 20, 2024
9:00 A.M.

The following Fountain County Commissioners were present at the meeting:
 Brenda Hardy, Andrew Hall and Tim Shumaker.

Public Comment

Daye Phillippo

She handed out an article from Harvard Business Review about "The Dark Side of Solar Power" in regards to the recyclability of the solar panels.

Angie Burke

She would like to have some questions answered as to the Solar farm's accessibility to our county. She wants to know why it so easy for them to enter the county and would like to see a cap on the amount of acres in Fountain County that could be put into solar. She had other questions and was told they would be answered at the meeting on February 29th at the Attica High School Cafeteria.

Tammy Hinote

She was concerned about water contamination. She would like to see a plan in place. She would like for the county to be proactive and not reactive if and when this happens. She was also concerned about the notification to citizens as Fountain County has little or no local newspaper to report the happenings in Fountain County.

Carol Owens

Carol wanted to confirm the Plan Commission meeting scheduled for February 22 and the Solar meeting on the 29th were still being held.

Bill Stonecipher

He asked that citizens give the Commissioners some respect and be civil when presenting. He owns 80 acres in the middle of one of the solar projects, however, he chose not to participate. He feels that the landowner can do what they want with their property.

Tim Kemple

He complimented the Highway Department on the conditions of the roads. He also stated he attended the Comprehensive Plan public meeting. It was concerning that 49% of all Fountain County students were receiving or qualified for the free lunch program at the schools.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by Brenda Hardy to approve the minutes of the Commissioner's meeting of February 5, 2024 as presented. Vote: 2-0

CLAIMS 1-142 (\$214,936.44) and Payroll Claims

A motion was made by Andrew Hall and seconded by Tim Shumaker to approve all claims. Vote: 3-0

Review and Acknowledge the Clerk's Monthly Report

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by Andrew Hall to acknowledge the Clerk's Monthly Report for January 2024. Vote: 3-0

Report of Collections – as submitted

A motion was made by Andrew Hall and seconded by Tim Shumaker to acknowledge the Report of Collections for the Health Department and Recorder for the month of Dec 2023 along with the report of collections for the Ambulance, Clerk, Health Department, Recorder and Sheriff for January 2024.

Vote: 3-0

COMMISSARY REPORT December 2023

A motion was made by Tim Shumaker and seconded by Andrew Hall to acknowledge the Commissary Report for July 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023. The balance is \$101,511.52.

Vote: 3-0

WEGA – Rod Bannon

Rod Bannon gave an update on the Economic Development for Fountain County. They are working to get more children in the schools and more jobs. They are working on the housing for Fountain County. Covington and Attica received \$750,000 each for housing from the first round of the READI grant. They will be receiving funds from READI 2.0 but do not know when or how much. They are focusing on the urban areas. The 9% housing tier was discussed. It is not Section 8 housing. It is based on income level. Childcare is still a concern and are working with another county.

More Solar Discussion

Daye Phillippo asked how the solar affects people moving in and out of the county. Tim Shumaker stated that Benton County has not seen a decline. Jeff Fishero said that money follows the students. We need more population in the county.

Andrew Hall addressed some concerns from citizens. His focus is to stop the decline in Fountain County and every little bit helps. He would also like to see more students in the area. Andrew also stated that if the county keeps on the current level, we will be out of money in a few years. The solar does help with the money in the county.

Angela Burke stated that they are hurting the county because solar will keep people out of the county.

Tim Shumaker stated that the county has roughly \$30 million in projects that need to be done due to neglect of the buildings. They are trying to do what is best for the county.

Debbie Morrett spoke and stated that she would like to see a cap on the amount of land that Fountain County will put into solar projects.

Highway Dept

Jason has talked with USI and he will need to run a stringer for support on Bridge #66. He was seeking permission from the Commissioners but needed to leave due to the length of the meeting.

Clerk – Patty Gritten

She received a grant in the amount of \$3,072 from the Secretary of State from the HAVA Grant for election supplies/equipment. She stated that there are apps available to update the public on elections and general information. She did not request money for this as she was concerned, she would not be able to sustain it after the grant was received and spent. She thought it might be a good way for the county to notify the residents about upcoming events and happenings.

Landfill – Roger Azar

Roger had received a letter from IDEM on the inspection of the landfill. They did find an area that was leaking gas and would need to be recapped along with some areas that need to be regraded and reseeded. He will contact Bell Excavating as they are the ones that previously did the work at the landfill.

will contact Bell Excavating as they are the ones that previously did the work at the landfill.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE MONDAY,
MARCH 4, 2024
AT 9:00 A.M.**

**DRAINAGE BOARD MEETING
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
COMMISSIONER'S MEETING**

A motion was made by Andrew Hall and seconded by Tim Shumaker to close the meeting. Vote: 3-0

Brenda Hardy

Tim Shumaker

Cecilia Chambers
ATTEST
