

BLACKFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S

MEETING November 6, 2023

The Blackford County Commissioners met in regular session at 8:30 a.m. on November 6, 2023, in the Commissioner/Council room on the first floor of the Blackford County Courthouse, Hartford City IN. The meeting was available on Zoom as well.

President John Lancaster called the meeting to order, and Auditor Sharon Hartley called roll with Commissioners John Lancaster and Laura Coons present. Also present were Tyler Hunt, Anne Owen, John Pluimer, Warren Brown, Cheri Brown, Bill Aspy, Kim Pitts, Meagan Westfall, Eddie Cansler, Jacqueline Cansler, Bill Smith, Judy Sadders, Ruth Jennerjahn, Chad McCoin, Brad Hille, Paul Schriver, Dan Eckstein, Jon Oswalt, Dennis Layman, Lisa Dominisse and Jim Heflin. Attending on Zoom was Lisa Simmons, Amy Latham, Mary Beal, Frances Mays, Dana Turner, Elizabeth Witt, Ryan Wallace and Sam Swenson.

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Commissioner John Oxley who passed away October 24, 2023.

Minutes of October 16, 2023, Regular Meeting were approved as presented on a **motion by Laura Coons and 2nd by John Lancaster. The vote was 2/0.**

County resident Jacqueline Cansler spoke for several minutes and demanded the commissioners immediately do away with electronic voting machines and go back to paper ballots. Clerk Kimberly Pitts had replied to Mrs. Cansler after receiving her demand and referred her to the State and County Election Boards.

Lisa Dominisse with Radiant Health (formerly Grant-Blackford Mental Health) reported they currently serve 678 Blackford County residents with programs for early diversion to help keep substance abusers out of jail.

County Farm Contract – some differences in acreage on the new contract came into question. Laura Coons agreed to research the acreage and have the correct amount at the November 20th meeting. One bid was received for today's meeting. Bidders McCoin and Hille agreed their bid will remain sealed until November 20th with the understanding the amount of tillable acreage could change.

Veteran's Affairs Officer Jon Oswalt offered to stay in the VAO position after the first of the year to help train his replacement if necessary. John Oxley had been seeking his replacement.

John Pluimer, Highway Superintendent – (1) Pluimer and Commissioner Coons attended the award ceremony for the next Community Crossings Grant. Blackford County was awarded \$239,973 to assist with the replacement of a bridge at Lake Mohee. The county match for the project is \$79,991. (2) Pluimer requested he be assigned to sign INDOT contracts. **John Lancaster moved to allow John Pluimer to sign necessary contracts with INDOT. Laura Coons 2nd and the vote was 2/0. (3)** The fall inspection by IDEM went great. (4) November 18 is the final day the Transfer Station will be open in 2023. The former landfill will reopen in April 2024. (5) Pluimer presented with the engineering firm Butler, Fairman and Seufert to work on small bridges. **Laura Coons moved to approve the \$45,000 contract for Phase 3. John Lancaster 2nd and the vote was 2/0.**

Clerk Kim Pitts reported early voting ends today (November 6) and election day is tomorrow (Nov. 7).

Community Corrections Director Tyler Hunt requested his office be closed Tuesday – Thursday, November 14th -16th while employees attend a conference. **Laura Coons moved to allow the office to be closed for conference and John Lancaster 2nd. The vote was 2/0.**

Sheriff Jim Heflin – (1) gave the inmate count as 68. (2) the new phone system at the jail will start when the old phone contract expires.

EMA Director Bill Smith – (1) commented that John Oxley was a good friend to EMA, and he will be missed. (2) The LEPC meeting will be Wednesday at the 4H building.

Purdue Extensions Cheri Brown – The Small Business meeting will be held Thursday at Hartford City, City Hall.

BCEDC Warren Brown – (1) Manufacturing Day for high school students has been restarted. The event was a great success and more of these events are being planned. (2) Installation of the pedestrian bridge at the golf disk park (Lions Club Park) was a success. The ramp and landscaping are currently in process. (3) November 17th is the cut off date for the next READI Grant.

Planning & Zoning Director Anne Owen (1) The Unsafe Building Ordinance was passed by Montpelier. It and Shamrock Lakes. Hartford City will act on the ordinance tonight. If passed, the ordinance will be on the commissioners November 20th meeting agenda. (2) The annual Veteran's Tree Lighting Festival will be held on Saturday, November 18th from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm on the square.

Facilities Manager Meagan Westfall (1) wants to hold a silent auction of office equipment and miscellaneous items for employees now through November 20th. Laura Coons moved to approve the silent auction as proposed. All unsold items will be offered to the public after November 20th. John Lancaster 2nd and the vote was 2/0. (2) The annex roof is in extremely bad condition. She is currently working on a legal notice to receive bids to replace the roof and, possibly, the parapet wall. (3) On a personal note, as the parent of a JROTC student, Westfall thanked the County Sheriff's Department, Hartford City Mayor, Fire and Police departments for the escort out of town on the way to the National Competition. The students were so excited at the escort and public turn out. They came in third out of 168 teams.

Regular Claims were approved in the amount of \$289,192.48 on a motion by Laura Coons and 2nd by John Lancaster. The vote was 2/0.

Miscellaneous claims were approved in the amount of \$84,977.21 on a motion Laura Coons and 2nd by John Lancaster. The vote was 2/0.

Payroll Claims were approved in the amount of \$95,015.58 on a motion by Laura Coons and 2nd by John Lancaster. The vote was 2/0.

Payroll (PPE 10/13/23) was approved in the amount of \$142,332.97 on a motion by Laura Coons and 2nd by John Lancaster. The vote was 2/0.

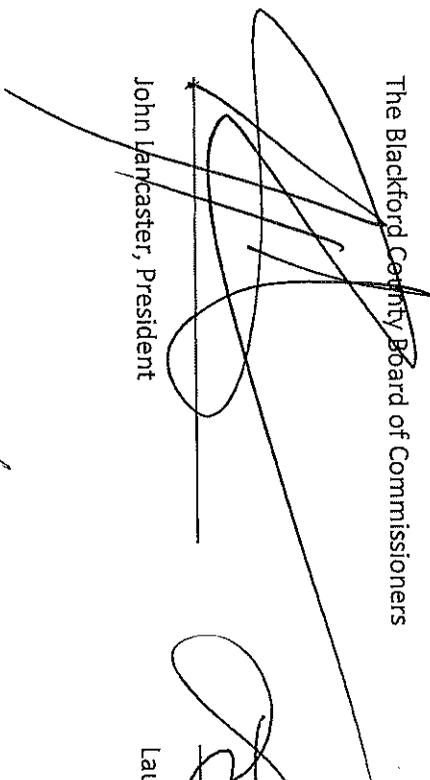
OPO Payroll (PPE 9/29/23) was approved in the amount of \$1,383.02 on a motion by Laura Coons and 2nd by John Lancaster. The vote was 2/0.

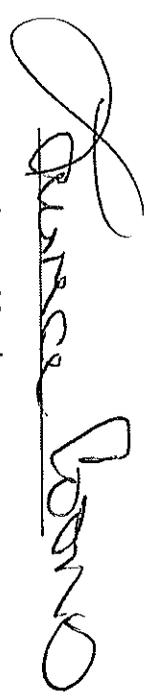
Public Comment: Judy Sadders asked what the county policy is for "road striping". John Plumer responded that there is no policy. The Highway Department only paints the main roads. Sadders requested all county roads be painted. Plumer said he will look into the cost involved.

There being no further public comment, Laura Coons made a motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Approved this 20th day of November, 2023.

The Blackford County Board of Commissioners


John Lancaster, President


Laura Coons, Member

Attest: 
Auditor Sharon Hartley