

CASS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

February 1, 2021

The Cass County Commissioners met at 1:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Hearing Room. Present for the meeting were Ryan Browning, Mike Stajduhar, Ruth Baker, Attorney Jeff Stanton, and Auditor Cheryl Alcorn.

Ryan Browning opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES – Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve the minutes, Ruth Baker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

CLAIMS & PAYROLL- Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve the claims and payroll as presented, Ruth Baker seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

CORONER – George Franklin was not available to present monthly report. The following report was submitted and reviewed for the month of January.

CAUSE OF DEATH	
NATURAL	5
SUICIDE	1
TRANSPORTS	2
OUTSIDE ASSISTS	2
AUTOPIES	2

DISPATCH E-911 – Amber Offutt was not available to present monthly report, currently on maternity leave.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT – Serenity Alter was not available to present monthly report, due to technology issues at the COVID Testing site. The following report was submitted and reviewed for the month of January.

The Health Department held 7 routine immunization clinics. During this report period 232 patients were seen for immunizations with 496 vaccines given. One flu immunization day was held for children.

Vital Records department received \$2,300 in document fees. The department printed 71 birth certificates, 153 certified death certificates, and 3 paternity affidavits.

Mike Collins completed 57 restaurant inspections; 2 pre-operational, 1 complaint, and issued 38 food permits. One environmental inspection and two follow-up inspections. Dan Musselman completed 8 environmental calls, 6 soil reports, 3 residential inspections, 8 residential searches, and 3 OSS permits.

Serenity and Dr. Ditty continue to assist administrators at area schools, long term care facilities, daycares, assisted living facilities, and local businesses for COVID testing and procedures. Weekly

to bi-weekly teleconferences with Indiana State Department of Health to report the COVID status of Cass County.

COVID testing and vaccines continue to be administered at the County COVID Clinic on Smith Street. Clinic will increase the days and hours of operation beginning in February. Clinic has administered 1100 COVID vaccines to local and surrounding communities.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT – Jeff Smith appeared before the Commissioners with the Highway Department report for January. Department had four days of snow operations, including one ice storm. Crews continue to stockpile stone, remove brush, and patch county roads.

A section of the old Cass Station Bridge collapsed during demolition. No injuries or equipment damage was reported. Army Corps of Engineers and DNR directed the debris be removed from the riverbed channel. Debris has been removed and project running ahead of scheduled completion date of April 1st.

County Road 325E bridge project is near completion with projected opening mid-February. County Road 400 South project is continuing on schedule with bulk of construction occurring in the spring of 2022 for final segment.

INDOT funding application has been submitted for improvements in the area of the Cass county Ag Park. Application for EDA CARES grant funds were not awarded.

Jeff reported for the year 2020; 31% of on-road man hours were spent on chip seal, paving, grinding, and related activities for road resurfacing. Additional 20% was spent on patching/maintenance and culvert/bridge work. Department performed 1294 man-hours of overtime, less than half of the prior year. Department suffered 24 cases of COVID either by positive test results or by exposure.

Jeff requested approval to hire a temporary part-time office employee to fill maternity leave vacancy. Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve the request to hire temporary part-time position to fill vacancy, Ruth Baker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PARK DEPARTMENT – Dana Hildebrand appeared before the Commissioners and presented the monthly report for January. Dana reported estimated revenue \$15,150 was received for January. Park staff are preparing and installing steel plate markers to identify modern electric camping sites. Dana reported over 900 dead ash trees have been cut and split over the past three years. Firewood bin will be filled and ready for next camping season.

JAIL – Sheriff Schroder requested approval to fill vacant full time cook position. Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve request to fill full time cook position, Ruth Baker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

COUNTY PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST POLICY – Prior to the reading of the policy, Ruth Baker announced the Commissioners have established three goals; transparency, efficiency, and public decorum/civility.

Jeff Stanton read aloud County Public Records Request Policy for approval with intention to implement policy as of March 1, 2021. Policy and record request form will be available on county website and submit to Public Information Officer. Copy fees shall comply with Indiana Code,

currently 10¢ per standard size black/white copy, or electronic/digital copies can be produced if requestor provides a new unused digital copying device. Public Access Counselor was consulted in preparing this policy.

Public Information Officer is designed to help coordinate the response to the person making the request in coordination with the office holder. Public Information Office will be responsible to make decisions regarding the release of records and the contents.

Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve the Public Records Request Policy as presented, Ruth Baker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

OPEN MEETING PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY – Ruth Baker highlighted item # 11 of Public Comment Policy by reading aloud, “A public meeting should not be viewed by the citizens as the exclusive method for the presentation of public comment. In fact, the public comment section of a public meeting should not be the first avenue that a citizen utilizes to present his or her concerns to the Commissioners. The Commissioners encourage the citizens to contact them directly by phone, email, United States Mail, or in person at Commissioner’s Office.”

Jeff Stanton continued by reading aloud the Public Comment Policy in full. Stanton added Commissioners are available and want to hear the community’s concerns. Stanton encouraged citizens to contact the Commissioners with their concerns prior to scheduled meetings. Stanton read aloud response from Public Access Counselor Luke Britt, ‘I have had the opportunity to view both policies, they are fair and legal. I really don’t have any recommendation, they appear unbiased and not directed toward anyone group or ideology. They are consistent with the access laws and my prior guidance. I think a Public Information Officer position is a good idea for fielding requests and/or questions, it’s similar to other municipalities structures.’

Mike Stajduhar stated the policy enforces the goals set by Commissioners to better serve the public. Stajduhar would like to see additional opportunities for the community by offering evening public forums.

Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve Open Meeting Public Comment Policy as presented, Ruth Baker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS – Commissioner Browning announced the retirement of Veteran’s Service Officer Larry Lowery. County received six applications and conducted interviews for the open position.

Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve the appointment of Tamara Derrick for position of Veteran’s Service Officer, Ruth Baker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Veteran’s Service Officer Tamara Derrick effective: February 9, 2021

Commissioner Browning introduced Tamara Derrick, she is retired from the United States Air Force and will begin transitioning into the position with Veteran’s Service Officer Larry Lowery and assume the responsibilities on February 9th.

Mike Stajduhar made a motion to appoint Katie Pearson to the North Central Indiana Regional Planning Commission, Ruth Baker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

NCIRPC Katie Pearson 1 yr 1-1-21 to 12-31-21

JAIL ADDITION – CHANGE ORDERS – Joe Hoffman presented for approval construction change orders for emergency key cabinet, loose bricks lintels modified door openings, detention grade door, paint detention grade door and frame, paint generator and docking station.

Mike Stajduhar made a motion to approve change orders as presented, Ruth Baker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Ryan Browning stated public comments limited to three minutes with six minutes limit overall and comments limited to agenda items.

Lora Redweik, 5524 N CR 600 E, Twelve Mile – Will future projects be may aware to the public prior to economic development agreements.

Commissioner Browning responded a standard operation procedure is being put into place with the Redevelopment Commission for economic development projects. Projects will be discussed prior to economic development agreement.

Lora Redweik asked if meeting agendas will be posted on the website 48 hours prior to the meeting to prepare questions.

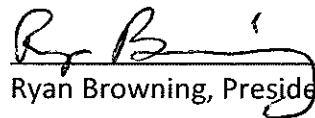
Jeff Stanton responded the intention of the policy encourages public to submit questions at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Lora Redweik asked are all record requests are being reviewed by ICE Miller.

Jeff Stanton responded only those that are litigation based.

Mike Fincher, 2700 Emmet Drive, Logansport – Memorial Home should be saved, it will be expensive. City is supportive of saving the building.

ADJOURNMENT – Ruth Baker made a motion to adjourn, Mike Stajduhar seconded. The motion carried unanimously.



Ryan Browning, President



Mike Stajduhar, Vice President



Ruth Baker, Member

ATTEST: 

Cheryl Alcorn, Auditor