

MINUTES
FOUNTAIN COUNTY COUNCIL
April 9, 2024
9:00 a.m.

The following Fountain County Council members were present at the meeting: Kelly Carlson, Tom Booe, James McKee and Jeff Fishero, Dudley Cruca and Denise Crowder. Dale White was late to the meeting arriving at 10:10 am.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Kelly Carlson and seconded by Tom Booe to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2024 meeting as presented.

Jeff Fishero: Y J McKee Y T Booe Y K Carlson Y

Vote: 4-0

Public Comment

Roger Holmes- 200 South Covington IN

Roger stated that he had just found out about the Solar Panels going in around his area. Dudley followed up with stating that he too had just found out due to Amber Roarks' resignation from the Plan Commission as Admin of Records. Roger wanted to know more about the Solar Farm. Kelly Carlson said she just found out and Jim McKee said he found out 1 week ago. No permits have been seen by the Council. Amber stated no permits have been filed. Roger stated that the map shows it is from Hardy Road almost to Layton Station Road. Roger stated he does not agree. He said all the fields drain through him and will cause him drainage problems.

Clint Kilby- Graham Creek Road

Do we have ordinances? It is very unclear. He has done research. He wants to know how many Megawatts are they bringing in? Where is it going? He stated the research he has done show height, fencing and draining issues. Also, who pays the taxes and what happens with solar panels when done? Kelly Carlson stated that she believes the companies pay for the improvements. Clint does not want to leave this for his children. He would like to know the decommissioning process. He wanted to know the name of the solar company. This one is called Hexagon.

Kelly Carlson had previously asked Rick Hall, with Barnes and Thornsburg, if there were any counties in Indiana with a cap on the number of acres in a County for solar farms. He said no at that time, but Kelly believes there is one in Noble County now. Kelly also stated she is under contract but they will not be utilizing their property. She will step out during the abatement vote. She wants to be truthful and transparent.

Tina Holmes stated that the Council can stop the abatement. Denise Crowder said she appreciates the concern, but if they want the caps and larger setbacks it will have to go to the Commissioners. Tina stated that too many people in local government are involved in the Solar project. She said people are very disappointed. She also stated it is greed and solar is a scam.

Rick Beck stated that he knows for a fact that solar panels are being put in at 400 W 100S on approximately 250 acres. It butts up against his father in law's property. That is just one parcel.

Amber Roarks asked if we are looking at Solar Panels in every Township of the County. Denise Crowder responded that there is nothing to stop it. She said also that she appreciates their concerns but if we want caps and larger setbacks the Commissioners have to approve it. It is not up to the Council.

Clint Kilby asked about the Grid and where it would tie in? He wants to know how it gets from Solar Panels to Grid. Brad Crain that they would have to build substations. Mr. Kilby stated he is very disappointed and shocked by this and our commissioners.

Tom Booe stated he would like to know more about the CO2 project also. He wants to know if they can put a cap on solar. Jeff Fishero stated that the plan commission had to request this. Tina Holmes said that they are letting them come in easily. Jim McKee stated he feels as though the county will be covered by solar farms and the citizens have no say. He said he stated this in previous years also.

Tina Holmes said more people would like to come to the meetings, but they are during the day when people work. She stated she would like to see the 6 p.m. meetings come back. Amber Roarks stated she has already discussed where she would move with her family. She stated they are running people out of the county.

Brad Crain stated that people who are leasing the land are taking the biggest risks. If the election goes as, it should in November the subsidies may not exist anymore. If we depend on wind and solar our electric bills could double. There will never be enough electricity for electric cars.

Tammy Hinote- She thanked the Council for serving and appreciates them. She stated she wants to see the County keep the CO2 out of here. Kelly Carlson said she had been approached and there is a 70/30 rule. If 70% of people in your area are okay with it, then it will be done either by contract or eminent domain. Kelly has researched this.

Dudley Crucea wanted to address the Solar issue. He wants people to know all permits will go to the planning commission. Jim McKee stated that all permits go to Roger Azar and he has to approve if it meets the standards. Amber Roarks stated that the Area Plan Commission is not kept up to date. It is your commissioners negotiating. Roger Azar is the engineer that is making sure it meets the County's ordinance. It's the legal counsel for Fountain County and the Solar Company. This is how the ordinance was written and cannot be changed until Commissioners want to change it. Amber stated that the Commissioners have stated they do not want to change this and it is being dragged out. Amber stated nobody is making a decision.

Carol Owens wanted to know about the Plan Commission Board. Jim McKee stated there are 5 citizen members, 3 of 1 party and 2 of the other party. There is a Council member and a commissioner.

Clint Kilby stated he had talked to someone who is also involved in solar and they stated they look for a corrupt or incompetent local government. He said they also look for an Amazon, a Hub or something going in close.

Roger Holmes wanted to know about money. He stated that the new jail cost too much. Tina Holmes wanted to know why we throw money at some projects and not others. She stated she has gotten quotes on towers and radios and those could have already been paid for. She said Maple Corner is a money pit.

Angie Burke- Attica Indiana

Angie Burke stated that the Dolphin Solar project has transparency issues. She stated that there needs to be a check and balance procedure. She said we have paved the road in gold for Solar Companies. She was curious how much we pay Roger Azar. Angie stated that the Commissioners have talked about hiring a Public Relations person. Kelly Carlson said maybe Public Relations is not the correct title, but would like to help spread information.

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Tim Kemple

He wants things to be transparent. He works for Geenex and wants to be open. He said he takes pride in his community. He states that they have advertised for meetings. Amber Roarks stated they nobody has notified adjoining land owners. Tim stated that Wayne Delong and Jennifer Hartley had sat down with home owners. Wayne Delong stated they did mail out information and had public meetings, which was also sent for advertisement.

Report of Collections – as submitted

A motion was made by Tom Booe and seconded by Denise Crowder to acknowledge the Report of Collections for the Ambulance (Feb & Mar), Clerk, Health Department (Feb & Mar), Recorder and Sheriff for March.

Vote: 7-0

Review and Acknowledge Treasurer’s Bank Reconciliation & Monthly Comparison Report

A motion was made by Jim McKee and seconded by Jeff Fishero to acknowledge the Treasurer’s Bank Reconciliation for March 2024 along with the Monthly Fund Comparison Report.

Vote: 7-0

Review & Acknowledge Clerk’s Monthly Report for February 2024

A motion was made by Dale White and seconded by Kelly Carlson to acknowledge the Clerk’s Monthly Report for February, 2024.

Vote: 7-0

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION

Hearing Opened at 10:19 a.m.

Public Comment: Carol Owens asked why there are currently 2 Courthouse Security Officers. Denise Crowder responded stating the Judge has one and one for the rest of the Courthouse. Pension will need to be increased by \$10,429.00.

Hearing Closed at 10:36 a.m.

Resolution 2024-4

Co General-Jail		
1000-0380-10102	Matron	\$6,792.96
1000-0380-10107	Deputy Matron	\$2,024.60
1000-0380-10506	Jail Commander/Deputy 5	\$5,287.96
		<u>\$14,105.52</u>

Co General Circuit Court

1000-0232-10801	Courthouse Safety Officer	\$10,788.34
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LIT- Public Safety

1170-0005-10100	Sheriff	\$11,306.26
1170-0005-10201	Chief Deputy	\$8,396.06
1170-0005-10302	Deputy Sgt/Detective	\$7,729.54
1170-0005-10404	SRO/Deputy 2	\$7,328.46
1170-0005-10501	Deputy 3	\$7,328.46
1170-0005-10601	Deputy 4	\$6,981.08
1170-0005-10800	Deputy 6	\$5,288.40
1170-0005-10802	Deputy 7	\$3,595.50
1170-0005-10901	Deputy 8	\$5,922.46
1170-0005-10902	Deputy 9	\$4,229.78
1170-0005-10903	Deputy 10	\$6,346.14

1170-0005-10152 Sheriff's Incentive Pay \$4,000.00
\$78,452.14

A motion was made by Dale White and seconded by Jeff Fishero to approve the additional in the amount of \$103,346.00. Vote: 7-0

Resolution 2024-5
2024 Comm Corr – Prob Grant
 9110-0000-10505 3rd Probation Officer \$5,786.00
 9110-0000-1000 Social Security \$ 446.00
 \$6,232.00

A motion was made by Tom Booe and seconded by Jim McKee to approve the above additional appropriation in the amount of \$6,232.00. Vote: 7-0

Resolution 2024-6
Co General
Ambulance
 1000-0301-44446 Ambulance \$365,000
 1000-0301-14000 Overtime \$250,000

Commissioner
 1000-0068-33490 Liability Insurance \$100,000
 1000-0068-33250 Consulting Fees (BLN) \$46,000

Radio Dispatch
 1000-0303-44101 Equipment \$22,488
 \$783,488

County Farm
 4924-0301-44446 Ambulance \$265,000

Cumulative Capital Development
Commissioners
 1000-0068-33625 Childcare – READI Grant \$ 23,950

A motion was made by Tom Booe and seconded by Jeff Fishero to approve the above additional appropriation in the amount of \$1,072,438.00. Vote: 7-0

Transfers
Statewide E-911
 From: 1222-0000-33550 Utilities
 To: 1222-0000-38600 Repair & Maintenance \$7,000

A motion was made by Kelly Carlson and seconded by Denise Crowder to approve the above transfer in the amount of \$7,000. Vote: 7-0

Co General – Prosecuting Attorney
 From: 1000-0009-33300 Travel/Mileage
 To: 1000-0009-33000 Postage \$168.56

A motion was made by Dale White and seconded by Denise Crowder to approve the above transfers. Vote: 7-0

Resolution 2024-7 – Approving Sheriff's Compensation Agreement
 A motion was made by Tom Booe and seconded by Jeff Fishero to approve

to the Council. Garth said he feels that Overtime has slowed down. He has 5 individuals who are interested in a class taking them from basic to advance. He will propose this in the 2025 Budget. A motion was made by Jim McKee and seconded by Tom Booe to move forward with the class. Vote 7-0

County Highway – Jason Lewis

Jason has decided to go with Stoops Freightliner for the new dump truck. It will be delivered by January 1, 2025 and cost \$254,000.00. He is sending a couple guys to class for hands on training for Oil Distribution.

Jason proposed a salary increase for Highway department. This will take effect on May 3, 2025. Secretary position will not be increased at this time. **A motion was made by Denise Crowder and seconded by Dale White to approve the salary increase.** Vote 7-0

Sheriff- Andrew Krout

Andrew stated they have 71 total inmates; 61 male inmates; 14 Sullivan, 11 Department of Corrections, and 2 Parole

Discussion was heard on the Employees comp time and time records. It was decided that Taylor will draft a letter for council to the department heads/office holders to address the problems.

Council – Jeff Fishero updated the Council on the “kick-off” meeting for the renovation of the Annex. This team will be meeting weekly. Kelly Carlson would like to have a joint meeting between the Commissioners and Council to discuss the renovations.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE
MONDAY, May 13, 2024
AT 9:00 A.M.**

A motion was made by Denise Crowder and seconded by Kelly Carlson to close the meeting. Vote: 7-0

Conrad Chambers
ATTEST

Kelly G. Carlson
Jim McKee
Dale A. White
Kelly G. Carlson
Denise Crowder
Jeff Fishero