

**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 Crucea 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 Cruea 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.

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	<u>\$5,287.96</u>
		\$14,105.52

#### **Co General Circuit Court**

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

#### **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	<u>\$4,000.00</u>
		\$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	3 <sup>rd</sup> Probation Officer	\$5,786.00
9110-0000-1000	Social Security	<u>\$ 446.00</u>
		\$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	<u>\$22,488</u>
		\$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

Resolution 2024-7 a Resolution Approving the Sheriff's Compensation Agreement.  
Vote: 7-0

### **Sheriff Salary Contract**

A motion was made by Jeff Fishero and seconded by Jim McKee to approve the 2024 Fountain County Sheriff Salary Contract beginning March 8, 2024  
Vote: 7-0

### **Sheriff Retirement – Fee Statement (\$12,211)**

Auditor requesting to pay the statement from the fund of Council's choosing.  
A motion was made by Tom Booe and seconded by Kelly Carlson to pay the fee statement in the amount of \$12,211 out of the Council fund (1000-0061).  
Vote: 7-0

### **AMEND SALARY ORDINANCE 2023-10**

A motion was made by Jeff Fishero and seconded by Kelly Carlson to amend the Salary Ordinance 2023-10 (changes made in red) as presented. Vote: 7-0

### **Ritter Strategic Services LLC**

Auditor seeking permission to pay invoice from Ritter Strategic Services out of the ARP Fund (8950) in the amount of \$1,575.00.  
A motion was made by Kelly Carlson and seconded by Dale White to pay the invoice from the ARP Fund. Vote: 7-0

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

### **Area Plan Commission- Amber Roarks**

Amber stated that she budgeted \$20,000 for consulting fees. She is requesting to transfer \$5,000 from Attorney fees to Consulting fees. She is also requesting an additional for \$15,000.00 for consulting fees. The county is paying the consulting fees for the solar project and then getting reimbursed. In the future, she would like to see the solar company pay the legal expenses as incurred and should be put into the ordinance as such. A motion was made by Jim McKee and seconded by Kelly Carlson to approve the transfer. Vote: 7-0

### **Wayne Delong- Geenex**

Wayne stated they are here to answer any questions, particularly on the preliminary resolution for the creation of an ERA. Tom Booe asked about the good neighbor policy. Wayne Delong stated once a permit is issued it will state what the setback will be. He stated land that usually goes into solar is leased not bought. Geenex oldest solar farm is in North Carolina and is approximately 8 years old. Jim McKee stated that he does not want any invasive plants planted under the solar plants or anywhere else.

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

### **Purdue Extension- Adam Tyler**

He stated that he currently has 2 open positions that he would like to consolidate into 1 full time position and 1 part time position. He would like the full-time position to be raised to \$38,000.00. He will move \$659 from Deputy 2 to Deputy 1. A motion was made by Jim McKee and seconded by Denise Crowder to approve. Vote 7-0

### **Ambulance- Garth Kagels**

Garth stated that the trucks should be ready in May. He said they are currently 12-18 months out for new vehicles. Kelly Carlson and Tom Booe attended a meeting with Stryker Asset Management, regarding a 2-year lease program for supplies. He would like the company representative to come in a do a presentation

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

Coussa Chambers  
ATTEST

Dale A. White  
Tom W. Booe  
Dale A. White  
Kelly L. Carlson  
Denise Crowder  
Jeff Fishero