

JAY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chad Aker



Brian McGalliard

Rex Journey

Attest:


Jay County Auditor**JULY 29TH, 2024**

The Jay County Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, June 24th, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the auditorium in the courthouse. Attending was Rex Journey, Brian McGalliard, auditor Emily Franks, attorney Wes Schemenaur, and Chad Aker, president, presiding. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the minutes from both sessions on July 8th, 2024. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

COURTHOUSE

Bruce Sutton, superintendent, came to the commissioners for expenditure approval. He presented a quote from Nu-Flow Indy for plumbing work in the circuit court restroom located on the north side of the third floor. The company has previously worked on the 2nd floor of the courthouse. The total quote came in at \$8,750 with half due at time of service. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the expenditure for Nu-Flow Indy and a claim for the deposit. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

ONE DIGITAL- HEALTH INSURANCE

Jessica Clayton, Senior Benefits Consultant, came to the commissioners to give a mid-year review on the insurance plan. She explained the county has trended very high in claims over the last 12 years, but have been trending well recently. The average increase for renewal has been a 4% increase versus the national average of 10-12%. The county's average loss ratio is 125%. The county's renewal last year was a 1% increase with the HSA option added. Their feedback from employee meetings had a lot of positive feedback. As a reminder the renewal included the 40% refund agreement which the county received for last year.

The current expense ratio is at 72%, the number of claims is at 63%. They will go into renewal with claims incurred August 1, 2023 to July 31, 2024 and paid through 9/30/24. The county's experience has medical inpatient/outpatient lower than trend, but RX usage is higher than trend, however 87% are using generic. They would still like to see plan members take more advantage of preventative visits. Also, 57 ER visits out of 126 were deemed avoidable.

Mrs. Clayton discussed options for the upcoming renewal. She will check into partially self-funded options along with fully insured options. An example of what partially self-funded might look like was presented to commissioners for review. They can build an employee navigator for enrollment or a mid-year check in for no cost to the county. She also added the IRS has increased the contribution limits for HSA (health savings account) for 2025. Mrs. Clayton explained to the commissioners that while PHP is their current carrier, One Digital has excellent relationships with all the carriers, which allows them to negotiate on the county's behalf. Mr. Aker added they are happy with PHP and noted the refund allowed the county to reduce employee premiums for the rest of the year.

ECI REGIONAL PLANNING DISTRICT- BROADBAND

Bill Walters, executive director, came to the commissioners to give them an update on broadband. Mainstream Fiber was not awarded any funding in the most recent round of Next Level Connections. Brightspeed was the winner on the provider side. However, there are still three more rounds of BEAD before January 2025. Community Fiber Solution is number one in the area for broadband services. Mr. Walters has met with Comcast to look at the area and to see if they are interested in participating in the area. Mr. Aker questioned if the main issues were with the challenges. Mr. Walter explained the providers are chosen by the state and the county is at their mercy for where they expand. He added most providers, such as Comcast, choose areas they are already in for expansion. Mr. Journey asked if the county would have to start all over again for the next round of grants. Mr. Walter confirmed the work would only be at the provider level. Autumn Marshall, ECI RPD Regional Coordinator for Broadband, explained the designated unserved and underserved areas should receive some grant monies. She added there should be a plan to build it for the future especially in the area of Salamonia.

ECI REGIONAL PLANNING DISTRICT

Bill Walters, executive director, discussed various updates with the commissioners. He explained the EDA resiliency grant still has interns and availability for six more months. The CEDS

(Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) is with Purdue and Ball State. They are writing the final draft and expect it to be completed by the end of August or first of September. Mr. McGalliard questioned if Blackford County was participating in the plan. Mr. Walters confirmed their government was not, due to political issues, but they did have some citizen participation. He added he hates when politics gets in the way of grant money.

An update on the SS4A (Safer Streets for All) grant was given. They have had their first meeting, formed a steering committee, had their first update with the state, and will issue two requests for quotes (RFQ) for contractual services in August. A couple computers have been purchased for the project and they will be looking at all the road and improvement plans.

An update on the USDA Best Grant 5 ended with \$16,000 left over as they could not hold enough meetings with the election this year. They have been awarded \$50,000 for USDA Grant 6. The funding is for any business entrepreneur in the region. They are already planning workshops for the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025. He reminded commissioners the CCMG (Community Crossing Match Grant) grant call is open January and July 2025. They have met with Salamina, Pennville, Bryant and Redkey. Mr. Walters is unsure of what funding each community has and what their project are but will know by September.

Lastly, Mr. Walters discussed an international business program they have in Delaware County. He attends the Select USA Investment Summit which is 3-4 days of speed dating. It gives you 30 minutes at a table for manufacturing, IT and everything in between. The last summit they had 18 meetings with 6 viable, and two scheduled to meet in the region. Mr. Aker asked what the commissioners could do to make Jay County more attractive to business.

Mr. Walters believed attracting people to the area will attract business, adding companies look for housing and quality of life. He noted they do not want a big check to come to, but are more interested in the community. Mr. McGalliard questioned how long they had been working on the program. Mr. Walters stated they had been working on it for the last eight years, which has been a slow process. He explained that it can be a lengthy and expensive process. He told the commissioners they have been doing this in Delaware County. At the end of 2022 they were just under 1 billion dollars in year-to-date investment for 11 new industries, creating 1,500 new jobs. He said they have 5 or 6 other companies that currently have goods coming over but only have a mailbox or office space. Their goal is to see how they're accepted or taken into the community before moving the industry over here. It has proven to be a good way of doing business.

Mr. McGalliard asked if this would raise the wages for the community. Mr. Walters believed it would as it brings in a new skill level. Mr. McGalliard questioned if this would be a separate contract from the one already in place with ECI RPD. Mr. Walters confirmed it would be a separate contract as they attend the summit, go overseas to the company, and take care of them when they visit here. While here they will tour the community including schools and churches. They will also take them to dinner. Mr. McGalliard asked if he would be willing to sit down with Travis Richards, JCDC Executive Director, to work on identifying assets in the county. Mr. Walters confirmed he would reach out to Mr. Richards. Mr. Journey questioned what a contract for the services would look like if the county was interested. Mr. Walters explained it would be \$30,000-\$70,000 a year, with \$7,000 just to get on the summit floor, \$20,000-\$30,000 for 10 days in Europe with 2 of the days being for travel. He explained they leave the hotel at 8-8:30 a.m. and will return 10-11 p.m as restaurants do not open until 7-7:30 p.m. Mr. Walters added agricultural and farm equipment builders would love to be here. Mr. McGalliard asked he meet with Mr. Richards and bring back a proposal to the commissioners.

SHERIFF

Larry "Ray" Newton, sheriff, came to the commissioners to discuss various topics. The first was a contract for a new website for the sheriff's department with DBS. The contract will be paid out of sheriff commissary funds and includes a onetime cost of \$5,450 for set up and quarterly payments of \$215. The contract is on a yearly basis with no automatic renewal. Brian McGalliard made a motion to approve the contract with DBS. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

His second request was for 15 additional county email licenses for his correction officers. The cost per email is \$6 a month and the licenses will be updated if there is turn over. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the additional email licenses. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. A claim for \$9,000 to Charles N Braun II related to new policies for the department was presented for commissioner approval. Brian McGalliard made a motion to approve the claim to Charles N Braun II. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the contract with Charles Braun. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Newton discussed a recent meeting with the Dunkirk police department, Samantha Rhodenhanel, and Chad Aker regarding the radios. It will be roughly a 12-18-month process to complete. Mr. Aker added the radios were not the best over the weekend and the county should probably start moving forward on the project. The phase two contract with Ritter Strategic Services includes a not to exceed amount of \$178,500. Mr. Newton added their biggest concern is the towers in the eastern part of the county. Brian McCalliard made a motion to approve the contract for phase 2 with Ritter Strategic Services. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JEMS

Gary Barnett and John McFarland, shift supervisors, came to the commissioners to give their monthly update on operations. They also requested a claim be signed to ESO Solutions for \$2,355.95. They already utilize the system for various bookkeeping but would like to add electronic timekeeping. It would be an additional \$72 a month or \$864 for the year. It would save over \$3,000 in overtime wages for the shift supervisor in collecting timesheets from both bases and figuring the timesheets for payment. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the addition of electronic timekeeping. Brian McCalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

A claim to Display Craft for \$3,745 related to the wrap on the new ambulance was presented for commissioner approval. The insurance claim has already been paid to the county for the expense. Brian McCalliard made a motion to approve the claim to Display Craft. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. McFarland spoke to the commissioners regarding the Handtevy method purchased. They have completed a training on the system with no issues. A study has been completed by the state of Indiana with the Bowen Center along with all 92 counties. They had not been consulted for any of the data listed in the study. Indiana does not have some of the issues seen in other states such as shutdowns. Jay County was identified as under the national average in areas that they should be and right on track in the other areas. He looks for the second study to be published with their data provided.

Lastly, Mr. McFarland discussed his classes starting in September. The class is almost full with people coming in from outside of the county. He has also been partnering with the new health department educator for the MIH. He would like permission to start the application for the mobile integrated health unit with the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. They would be visiting patients in their home to potentially help with health screenings, vaccinations, treatments, follow ups, identify risks and could help the patient find resources. The goal would be to help the community and decrease the number of calls in the emergency departments. They would need a certification to go and complete these tasks with the possibility of a vehicle in the future. Brian McCalliard made a motion to satisfy his request. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JAY COUNTY COUNTRY LIVING

Cindy Bracy, president JCCL Advisory Board of Directors, came to the commissioners to discuss operations. The recent resident count is at 20 with one resident moving in and one having moved out. There were two residents waiting on financial assistance with one being resolved with RCAP. The pest control company has been at the facility and is scheduled to come the first of every month. Mrs. Bracy reported the paperwork has been submitted for the RCAP grant. The director's job description has gone back and forth and will be addressed again at the board's meeting on Monday.

Mrs. Bracy discussed the need for a new meter on the fuel tank at the facility. This would allow them to report and track the fuel usage for a cost of \$1,179.99. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the purchase up to \$1,300. Brian McCalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

An MOU (memorandum of understanding) with United Way was presented for commissioner approval. The county is going to be considered a sponsored program by United Way with the Second Harvest Food Bank. However, the county will still bear the financial cost of any items. Mr. Journey questioned how much the agreement would save the county. Mrs. Bracy explained they will be able to obtain meat for under .20 cents a pound with food product at Aldi prices. She is not sure of the exact amount, but foresees a substantial difference. There will be a delivery fee of \$50-\$70 every two weeks. She hopes the facility will use what is available for donation and build a menu plan only purchasing the other items needed. This is the first time Second Harvest has completed an agreement like this one. Brian McCalliard made a motion to approve the MOU with United Way. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Bracy informed the commissioners of a trespassing issue they have dealt with twice. She requested an overall policy be created to cover those they have had issues with in the past. Mr. Schemenaur will work on a policy. He asked that the board keep in mind the facility is a shared living space with tenants who are allowed to have visitors. The policy would also include naming the

appropriate person in authority to give notice in writing and not infringing on residents' rights to have visitors of their choosing.

Mrs. Bracy discussed the creation of an admissions policy for the facility. She stated they would like to remove an emergency admissions policy as it takes time to review submissions properly. Her goal is to look into other options such as the health department or religious organizations to help with housing during inclement weather. Mr. Journey questioned if the shelter was not already available in those cases. Mrs. Bracy explained the shelter only has 8 beds and sometimes they have already been kicked out of the shelter. While they have not been using the application, they are looking to build a new one. Mr. Aker asked for the boards stance on the policy. Mrs. Bracy stated she was bringing it forward since it was addressed by the board.

Lastly, Mrs. Bracy had questions related to the farm rent including the amount of acreage included in the contract and the terms. Ms. Franks provided the contracts were for every three years and ended December 31, 2024. The total tillable acres included in the farm lease was 258.87. A copy of the agreements will be forwarded to the board for review. Mrs. Bracy questioned the process for bidding. Mr. Schemenaur explained it would need to be advertised in the newspaper the county is accepting bids.

OWNER OCCUPIED REHAB

Nate Kimball, Assistant Executive Director, came to the commissioners to discuss choosing an engineering firm for the owner-occupied rehab program. EGIS, formerly Beam, Longest & Neff, was the only company out of 10 requests sent to respond back to the county. They did not include any pricing in their information sent. Chad Aker recommended they take it under advisement since there was no pricing and make a decision at the next meeting. Rex Journey made a motion to table the proposal. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Samantha Rhodehamel, director, came to the commissioners to discuss a contract with ERS wireless related to the county tornado siren on top of the courthouse. It has been reviewed by the county attorney and an automatic renewal clause has been removed. The annual contract would be for \$1,260. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the contract with ERS Wireless. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

HIGHWAY

Robert Howell, Superintendent, came to the commissioners to discuss various items. The first item was regarding a retired semi-trailer that was recently replaced by the storage container. The retired semi-trailer is made of wood and fiber glass siding that is falling away. Mr. Howell would like approval to remove the trailer as a safety hazard and has checked with local scrap yards. The scrap yards are offering very little money for the trailer and it will require additional work for removal. However, he has an individual who is willing to take it from the facility. Brian McGalliard made a motion to approve the transfer of the trailer pending approval by the county attorney. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Howell also asked for approval regarding the build out of the new truck recently approved. The current cost to build out a new truck is \$69,000, but noted the price is going to go up. He would like to lock in the price for the build. Chad Aker requested formal paperwork be obtained for their approval.

Lastly, Mr. Howell discussed the completed road conversion on 500 S for an estimated \$117,000. There was an individual who is planning on hauling 80-90 loads of dirt in the coming weeks. They have been advised to have no heavy truck traffic on the road for a month or two to preserve the conversion. He would like to have an emergency closure of the road ahead of any potential damage. Brian McGalliard made a motion to create an emergency no truck route for approximately thirty days on 500 S between Hwy 27 and Boundary Pike. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

The payroll docket was presented for commissioner approval. Brian McGalliard made a motion to approve the payroll docket. Rex Journey seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The claims docket for July was presented for commissioner approval. Rex Journey made a motion to approve the claims docket. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

The clerk's report for June was presented for commissioner approval. Brian McGalliard made a motion to approve the clerk's report. Rex Jourmay seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

A proposed 2025 contract was presented by the Jay County Humane Society for animal control services. The contract requested an increase of 3% from the current agreement. The commissioners would like to get more clarification on the hours of operations from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mr. Aker also noted the amount would need to be approved by the council in their 2025 budget. Rex Jourmay made a motion to table the contract pending more clarification and council approval. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

A new contract with Randy Cleaver from Cleaver Cabling and Consulting for IT work was presented for commissioner approval. The new contract would be effective January 1, 2025. Ms. Franks explained the only change to the contract was an increase per hour from \$75 to \$100. The last time the contract was updated was in 2017 to begin January 1, 2018. While she was unaware of the cost for another IT service, it would be hard to replace the knowledge of all the county systems. Rex Jourmay made a motion to approve the contract with Cleaver Cabling & Consulting. Brian McGalliard seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Claims related to the ICJH Comprehensive plan for drug free communities' monies were presented for commissioners' approval. The claims were as follows; Jay County Community Center \$500, Jay School Corporation \$750, Indiana University Health: Jay \$850, Youth Service Bureau of Jay Co \$1,253.79, A Better Life Brianna's Hope \$1,500, Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition \$3,153.79 (PAST Recovery), Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition \$4,003.77 (Administration), Jay County Sheriff's Department \$4,003.79. Brian McGalliard made a motion to approve the claims as presented. Rex Jourmay seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

With no further business, Brian McGalliard made a motion to adjourn at 11:40 a.m.; Rex Jourmay seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

JAY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Chad Aker



Brian McGalliard



Rex Jourmay



Attest:

Jay County Auditor

JULY 31, 2024 JOINT SESSION

The Jay County Council and Commissioners met in a special joint session on July 31, 2024. Present were council members Harold Towell, Cindy Bracy, Dave Haines, Randy May, Faron Parr, commissioner Rex Jourmay, auditor Emily Franks, attorney Wes Schemenaur, and commissioner Chad Aker, president presiding. Absent was commissioner Brian McGalliard, council member Jeanne Houchins and council president, Matt Minnick. The purpose of the joint session was to discuss ARP monies.

Wes Schemenaur, county attorney, provided members with a brief overview of the ARPA funds including how the funds can be obligated and spent. The county has chosen revenue replacement which allows the money to be used towards any government services. The money must be obligated under contract for property or services by December 31, 2024. The obligation could also be an interagency agreement in place of a contract by December 31, 2024 and would still be required to be expended by December 31, 2026. The agreement must include one of the following terms: imposes conditions on the use of funds by recipient agency, department or part of government, governs provision of funds from one agency, department or part of government to another, or governs the procurement of goods or services. It also must include all three of the following: Agreement has specific requirements (scope of work), is signed by all parties, and does not disclaim binding effect or state that it does not create rights or obligations.

Mr. Schemenaur also explained possible ways to obligate the funds starting with the 68-acre project. An interagency agreement could be completed with the Jay County Redevelopment Commission or the City of Portland to utilize funds for development of this project. This could be contingent upon READI funding, but must have a plan B (or C). The READI information is estimated to be finalized

in October 2024. Another option, the countywide broadband project, was not awarded BEAD grant funding and will likely not allow enough time for completion. This will be addressed by Mainstream Fiber later in the meeting during their presentation. Also, Emergency Radios could be an option by entering into an interagency agreement with Jay County Emergency Management and other municipalities that are going to participate. The funds may not pay for the entire project, but could be used as a match for other grants. However, it could be opened up to some of the smaller municipalities and organizations for the purchase of radios. There might be some broad costs available to the county in the next six weeks.

MAINSTREAM FIBER NETWORKS

Shawn Gardner, the director of community outreach and government affairs with Mainstream Fiber, came to give an updated presentation to the county. Their business was founded in Brown County, Indiana by Brian Gabriel to bring broadband to rural residents. He explained broadband as a utility is looked for by developers at shovel ready sites. They are a fiber first company to provide high-quality, reliable fiber internet to all our customers. They are an Indiana based company and are 100% focused on serving rural Indiana. Their end goal would still be a whole-county approach and aim to meet all underserved and un-served in the county. They are partnership oriented and are fully funded by their capital partner, Searchlight.

Mr. Gardner explained the timeline for BEAD (Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program) which would have IBO (Indiana Broadband Office) announcing the first round of winners November 1st, 2024. IBO had rebutted a lot of the addresses originally challenged for the Next Level Connections grant. He stated FCC Costquest Data had changed from 5 to 7 which had created issues for service eligibility. It went from approximately 3000 eligible addresses to 198 in the county. The current providers that are within the county can state they cover an area. They have found with a lot of fixed wireless customers once the carrier visits the site, they realize they cannot provide it in that location, but do not update their service maps. Jeff Marston, chief communication officer with Mainstream Fiber, provided an updated map of the served, underserved and unserved areas in the county.

Mainstream has built redundancy into their systems to make issues unnoticeable by the end user. This includes a 5G overlay to maintain communication and provide community access points. Many of those access points were located at volunteer fire departments, parks and libraries for online learning opportunities. The county could have input in where those access points should be placed. Mr. Journey asked for updated figures for the project. The cost, as of today, is \$7.8 million for the build out, with \$2.4 million from Jay County and a \$2.5 million match from Mainstream. They are hoping the remainder could come from BEAD funding. The 7.8 million would cover 2,281 passings (which is considered a home or business). That would still leave about 1500 houses/passes remaining. During the two-year period it would establish the footprint and would then work on the edges.

Chad Aker recently attended the Hoosier Huddle and spoke with Steve Cox, from the Indiana Broadband Office, regarding BEAD funding. Of the total grant, 75% was provided from the state and 25% from the provider. Some counties were not including any match at all. Mr. Gardner explained the additional could be requested through the BEAD program. They discussed areas that are located within Connect America Fund (CAF) that can't be considered and are blocked from any kind of BEAD program funding. Autumn Marshall, ECI's regional coordinator for broadband support training & education, explained that was awarded to Community Fiber between FCC and that internet service provider, which left out local government. A lot of Salamonia was awarded CAF so they would not be allowed to participate in the BEAD program. Their own investment could cover those locations, but would be omitted from BEAD eligibility. Bill Walters, ECI Regional Planning Director, explained it is more wireless than fiber connection and works in more rural locations. He added wireless is less reliable and that there is a time limit associated with those projects to be completed.

Rex Journey asked why the county was not awarded funding the first time and if the county would receive any for the next round. Mr. Gardner explained the first was for NLC (Next Level Connection) funds and this grant would be through BEAD. He added a lot of the money went to companies already existing in a location looking to expand and not projects. Mainstream has been told that those not selected in Next Level would be first in line for BEAD monies. Rex also questioned when we would know their decision. November 1, 2024 is the expected timeline for the announcement. They think a strong letter of support from the county would greatly help the county with the grant application. Mainstream plans to submit an application regardless and plans to support Jay County throughout the process. Chad Aker asked if the county were to allocate money towards this, what would be the timeline to contribute. When Mainstream has worked with other counties, they have allowed them to pay over a seven-year time period. Rex Journey asked what the timeline to complete the project would be. Jeff Marston said Mainstream would start designing and begin construction of the project immediately. A big obstacle in the beginning is getting through the permitting process.

RADIOS

Samantha Rhodahamel, Emergency Management Director, gave an update on the contract with Ritter Strategic Services. Barry Ritter was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement. However, Mr. Ritter has already spoken to Motorola and the state regarding the project. They will administer an end user survey in the next 1-2 weeks. Once completed it will give a better idea of needed inventory and estimated cost. The cost of the radios will be the easiest and quickest information to provide the county. October would be the earliest for any sort of pricing on needed infrastructure, such as new towers. Mr. Ritter felt at this time, it would not be in his best representation to provide any numbers, but is going to get this information as quickly as possible. It is possible they may be able to get by with less equipment, as technology is more advanced with this type of system.

Harold Towell questioned if everyone in the county is on board with this project. Ms. Rhodahamel reported that other entities are willing to be part of this project, but the biggest concern is with the funding. Gary Hendershot, deputy director from Community Corrections, expressed concern as a self-supporting department to pay for new equipment. Sheriff Ray Newton assured them they would be included in the transition. Ms. Rhodahamel spoke in response to concerns about the highway department being able to communicate with the new system. The county highway department has a completely different system, and cannot operate daily on the emergency system, as it is against state law. Cindy Bracy questioned what would happen in emergency situations, such as weather, to communication through the new radio system. Ms. Rhodahamel explained in the event an emergency disaster is declared, the county can write in county plans to allow them to temporarily operate on the systems. The decision would need to be made if a radio is necessary for every truck in the highway department, as this would be an additional cost to the county. Currently, the highway dispatcher contacts their office, who then contacts a sheriff dispatcher to report any needed information. Ms. Rhodahamel felt that decision should be made by the highway department. Sheriff Ray Newton offered other ways to communicate to his department besides radios, citing cellphones. He felt that the county cannot keep waiting for other people to get on board, noting this subject has been discussed since 2021.

Dave Haines, discussed a recent vehicle pursuit within the county and how the lack of communication ability made other departments unable to assist. He noted this is a major safety issue for the officers. Ms. Rhodahamel added she was present in dispatch during the pursuit and witnessed dispatchers unable to contact anyone through radio. She added the fact that our deputies are supposed to protect us, though with this lack of communication, who is protecting them. Chad Aker noted getting the cost analysis from Ritter would give a better idea of what can be done. He remarked that this is something the county really needed to do. Ms. Rhodahamel cited that 51% of the people in the county live in a town or city versus 49% that live in a rural area. Cindy Bracy explained that out of the 12 townships in the county, 10 have no/limited radio contact. She believes that these statistics support that this project should be a priority. Mr. Aker added, besides ARP funds there are other options that could be used for the project such as windfarm, EDIT, Infrastructure, Cum Cap and Rainy Day. Mrs. Bracy questioned if there were any matching grants the county could utilize to help pay for this. Ms. Rhodahamel believes from time to time, Motorola does offer grants, but that they would be the best to answer this question.

Mr. Aker added there were other uses identified for ARP monies included in the county economic development plan such as a heated County Highway building that is estimated to cost \$2.2 million, County Public Safety building for an EMS Base/ Health Department/Coroner building that is estimated to cost \$3 million, or a Solid Waste building that is estimated to cost \$1.6 million. He suggested decisions be made when the final information is received, which is planned to be the end of October or the first of November. Mr. Journey agreed, adding there is no reason to hurry the decision, as there should be no problem allocating the money by the end of the year between all the potential projects. Mrs. Bracy spoke in favor of the radio project and felt that a commitment should be made now instead of waiting until closer to the December 31, 2024 deadline. Bill Walters, ECI, advised the county to consult with Baker Tilly, to help determine the best avenue and other possible funding options.

FUNDING REQUEST

Gary Hendershot, deputy director Community Corrections, spoke to members regarding a funding request. Their department is a self-revenue only agency and they were impacted by COVID which resulted in lost revenue. Cindy Bracy asked if there was a way to increase the number of offenders that participate in their program. Mr. Hendershot stated that there are a lot of components in order for that to happen. The decision to participate is mainly up to the offender with most now choosing to complete jail time rather than community corrections or probation. They are asking for money to pay for their building rent for 2025 and 2026. At this time, they pay \$6,000 per year from user fees that

are collected. Mr. Aker said that if the department is only asking for \$12,000, this could be paid from the commissioner's budget.

Auditor, Emily Franks, gave members information about other possible fund options. The information includes the amounts that are remaining in the fund and how it can be spent. She also explained that the LIT-Public Safety fund could be used to pay for the radio project. Currently, the fund is used to pay for vehicles and wages for the Sheriff's department. There will be more discussion for a possible increase to the public safety portion of the local income tax rate (LIT). This increase would include every city and town and could be used towards the cost of the new radio system.

With no further business, Faron Parr made a motion to adjourn at 7:20 PM; Dave Haines seconded the motion and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

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Rex Journay



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Brian McGalliard

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