

Ripley County Commissioners Meeting

July 10, 2023

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Present: Mark Horstman, President, Kendall Hankins, Amy Copeland, Auditor & John Ertel, County Attorney. Chris Schmaltz was absent.

Rick Anderson – Veregy

Veregy came in with some prices for the Courthouse Renovation. Mr. Anderson will be attending the Ripley County Council meeting to talk to them about numbers.

Maintenance – Craig Herbert

Mr. Herbert brought in a quote from GenSet to fix the generator in the annex for \$1,032.99. The Commissioners told him to get the generator fixed.

Motion: Commissioner Hankins made the motion to approve the June 23, 2023 meeting minutes, **Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Kendall Hankins, **Seconded by** Mark Horstman. Motion passed 2 yes, 1 absent.

Motion: Commissioner Hankins made the motion to approve claims and payroll, **Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Kendall Hankins, **Seconded by** Mark Horstman. Motion passed 2 yes, 1 absent.

Health – Lexi Bushhorn

Ms. Bushhorn was in to talk about opting in to the new health department funding. Ms. Bushhorn stated that all the work at the state has been done and approved.

Highway – Jason Edwards

Mr. Edwards stated that chip and seal would be done tomorrow, 07/11/23.

New tractor is down again. Issue: Rim.

2023 Budget: Everyone will receive a raise, across the board that will be based upon evaluations. 1.4% increase on overall budget.

1/24/23 Pulskamps is installing new flooring in the office – part of the remodel. Painting done prior too. Ceiling will be patched.

Equipment on next year's budget: 4 plows, 1 new bridge truck, 1 new single dump truck and 2 pick-ups. No major equipment. Kendall voiced concern about the rotation of dump trucks. Kendall stated that there were 2 dump trucks in the 2023 budget and only one was purchased. Why the request for 2 if 2 were not needed? Jason stated that they are good in terms of major equipment. Oldest dump truck has ~70,000 miles on it. Commissioners voiced concern that a request for 3 to 4 trucks will be made at once. Jason said this shouldn't happen. Jason mentioned possible use of leased trucks and it could save money. Mr. Edwards look into this.

Grader situation: Only 18 miles of gravel roads left after this year. Will plow and do another 10 next year and then delete one grader.

Two more bridges to be replaced included in next year's budget: 900 S and 550 S.

Mr. Edwards mentioned the complaint about damages made to fence by the Highway department. Landowner requesting \$250 for damages. Jason stated that HWY didn't do it, but offered a post, but the gentleman wants the money. Damage to fence consists of 3 strands of barbwire ~22 feet long and one post. It was an Ohio County wheel loader. John Ertel asked if there were witnesses. Jason stated that it was seen by Mert Huntington. The wheel loader cut up Bear Creek and turned down Mexico Ridge so they could come back around. The road was impassable because of a Red Oak. Ohio County pushed it into the fence. Kurt, Ripley County HWY, removed the tree. John Ertel asked if this can be argued then, Jason said yes. John stated that if a letter is received by a lawyer to forward it to him.

Jason stated that he cut the budget by ~\$100,000.00.

Kendall asked about salt and if they are letting the pile of cinders go away and replacing it with salt/sand. Jason said yes.

Jason said that he looked at the snow routes and came up with 2 extra guys – will be reassigning them.

Mark shared with Jason that he had made the call to have the 46 project signs removed.

Mark asked if Jason reevaluated the alternate routes since the end of construction – do we need to repair any. Mark mentioned 1300 and that Jason needs to see what the State will pay for. He encouraged Jason to get all he can from the State to cover these expenses.

Mark asked about the stolen sign. Jason stated that it was replaced.

Kendall asked if they have received the 2 new trucks. Jason stated, soon. Jason added that the old trucks will be used as fuel trucks.

Kendall told Jason that he was asked to tell Jason thanks for the job the HWY department has done and that they have been good to work with. Mark added that he has received compliments, as well, about the HWY.

HWY Training is scheduled for July 22nd.

Area and Planning –

Tad Brinson explained that there was a request for rezoning submitted by Brian Smith and that the Board does not have a recommendation.

Mr. Rod Swinney presented on behalf of Brian Smith who was running late to the meeting. Mr. Swinney presented blueprints and explained in great detail the plans. The purpose of the building would be for small

business owners. He made very clear that the building is not going to be a gated storage unit. Public were present and voiced concerns and not in favor of the rezoning. Neighbors concerned of who will rent the building, the cleanliness kept, traffic, and ruin to the county/rural setting. Mr. Smith arrived and stated that he wants to elevate the area. He has high standards and this will be reflected within lease agreement.

After asking for anymore comments and/or questions:

Kendall stated that he is fine with it, that he hears the concerns and understands. Sometimes there is some progress that needs to be made. The plans sold him. If somebody can invest in Ripley County that draws money in, that's good. For far too long we have steered away from it and it has cost us dearly. He doesn't want to keep doing that, of course, within reason.

Mark stated that he understands the concern because of the bad example down the road (from this property). If he felt it would knock the property value down, he would say no, but he believes the right thing to do, is to allow it to happen. With the amounts of efforts and money put into the request, that there is some form of protection with the ordinance, he believes Mr. Smith will be a good neighbor – not convenience that he won't be.

Motion: Commissioner Hankins made the motion to approve the rezoning, **Action:** Approve, **Moved by** Kendall Hankins, **Seconded by** Mark Horstman. Motion passed 2 yes, 1 absent.

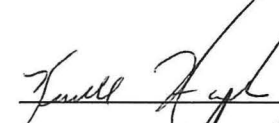
Kendall asked John Ertel about the no recommendation from the Area Planning Board. John stated that this can happen. Kendall asked Tad Brinson to rely to the Board to do their very best to always have a recommendation.

Mark addressed with Tad the concerns expressed to him that the Area Planning office was closed with no note of what to do in their absence. Tad stated that he was out of State, Vicki had a death in the family and Dwight had appointments. Mark stated that some other arrangements should have been made. Mark mentioned possible clerical staff coverage. Kendall stated that he understands things like this happens. John Ertel suggested that a note be hung on the door of who to contact if they were needed.

Motion: Commissioner Hankins made the motion to adjourn, **Action:** Adjourn, **Moved by** Kendall Hankins, **Seconded by** Mark Horstman. Motion passed unanimously.

 _____ Mark Horstman, President

 _____ Chris Schmaltz

 _____ Kendall Hankins

Assts:  _____ Amy R Copeland-Ripley County Auditor