

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

Wabash County Commissioners met in regular session in the Wabash County Courthouse on Monday, September 25, 2006. President Brian Hauptert called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. with all members present: Brian Hauptert, Les Templin and Darle Dawes. Templin moved to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2006 meeting as written. His motion was seconded by Dawes, and approved with a 3-0 vote.

Wabash County Health Officials Jane Skeans, Lori Foust and Dr. Dean Gifford were present to discuss a letter received from the Wabash Plain Dealer sent to the Commissioners asserting that “information regarding a reported human case of a potentially deadly disease in our county should have been volunteered by the Health Department to all pertinent media.” The letter followed an article in the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette with a bold headline “Wabash man on mend after West Nile bout.” County Health Nurse Jane Skeans stated she wanted to “make it clear that it is not my duty to report to the WPD....that if it was contagious – I would have reported it. But that I am under no obligation except to the state.” Templin stated that in the past the Commissioners have asked that when there is a “situation” that the Health Department fax the information to the media. Skeans stated that “she doesn’t think that she has been uncooperative” and Hauptert stated that “if the Health Department had generated a press release and it had gone to everyone that would be different.”

Larry Rice, Highway Department Supervisor inquired of the Commissioners Attorney as to whether or not the county had received anything from a letter sent concerning road damage. He also stated that the Commissioners need to set a date for the annual material bids. The Board set October 30th at 10:00 A.M. to receive the bids. Rice then reported that he would need to request Additional Appropriations from the Council for a.) Fuel and Lubricants: \$21,000; b.) Other Supplies-General & Undistributed: \$2,000; c.) Employee Health Insurance: \$14,000; and d.) Other Supplies – Maintenance: \$500. for a total of \$37,500. Templin moved to approve to submit the requests to the Council, seconded by Dawes and passed by a 3-0 vote. Rice also presented a status report from Matt Bobay, BFS Engineer, on the Old State Road 15S Phase II project for the Commissioners to review. The Board also discussed a drainage problem in Laketon with Rice.

Sheriff Leroy Striker reported the following:

1. An average daily population in the jail last week of 109.23 inmates, with 114 in jail this morning.

2. Striker also reported that the interior renovation construction at the jail should be finished this week. They are waiting on two cameras to be installed and then should be able to use the new spaces.

3. Striker and Chief Probation Officer Dallas Duggin, representing Judge Chris Goff, explained the Electronic Home Detention program that the Judges, Probation, the Sheriff and Jail Commander are meeting regularly to develop as a solution to help with the problem of jail overcrowding. If the judge approves an inmate for the program then they could be released with an EHD device until sentencing. The inmates who would qualify would be able to "bail out" anyway but could not afford the bail bond. This could allow them to be working instead of sitting in jail. Duggan explained that his Probation Department does record checks on anyone who is arrested so a Judge would have that information before approving an inmate for the program. Once on the program an inmate will be charged a daily fee for the device to pay help to pay for the equipment. The Commissioners applauded the effort to reduce the jail population without jeopardizing the public's safety. Templin made a motion to proceed with the plans for the program and stated that they will work with the Auditor to find the funding for the program. Once an inmate is put on the EHD funds will be generated to Community Corrections to help offset the cost of the program. Also there should be a savings realized through less prisoner meals served and inmate health care. Dawes seconded the motion to proceed and it was passed unanimously by the board.

Dallas Duggin also presented a request to the Commissioners for permission for one of his probation officers to attend specialized training pertaining to the new Drug Court scheduled to start in Wabash County in January, 2007. Training will be held in Indianapolis in early October and additional training will be in Reno, Nevada. Duggin stated that he normally does not send any staff for out-of-state training but this is a week long comprehensive course and his department has a scholarship that will help pay for it but the County must pay 20% of the costs which should be approximately \$2500. He would like to use Probation User Fees for this expense if the Commissioners approve it. Templin moved to approve the request. His motion was seconded by Dawes and passed by a 3-0 vote of the Board.

Emergency Management Director Bob Brown requested the signatures of the Commissioners on a Sub-grant agreement from Homeland Security not to exceed \$11,250. to be used for 10 laptop computers to be used with the ortho-photography recently done for the state. The Board approved the request. Brown also reported that the "Courthouse" grant was not approved due to the time filed but that it was still "in the hopper" for later consideration if monies are available. Additionally, Brown reported that fifteen had graduated from the recent CERT class held at White's Residential and Family Services facility.

Wabash County Auditor Jane Ridgeway reported that The Schneider Corporation representative will be setting up the GIS project planning session in the coming weeks.

Pam Friend representative for Pen Products reviewed the various products and services offered by the Department of Corrections industries. She asked that the County officials would “give us a chance when you have bids coming up”. The products and services offered are made by the inmates in the various state institutions. The quality products are competitive in price as well as provide the inmates with training opportunities to learn skills and trades and to give them a better chance at not returning to jail.

In other business Brian Hauptert nominated Lester Templin to serve as the Commissioners representative on the newly restructured Economic Development board. Dawes seconded the motion and it was approved by a 3-0 vote of the Board.

Commissioners’ Attorney Tom Mattern reviewed a letter received from Jim Hall of Urbana. Following discussion, no action was taken at this time.

The Commissioners voted to approve the 2007 County Holiday Schedule as discussed last week. Considering the County Employees, they decided to use the State Holiday schedule of 14 Holidiays as a guideline but to add Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve while keeping President’s Day as well as has been in the Wabash County schedule in the past. This will give County Employees 16 paid Holidays in 2007 the same as has been approved for 2006.

In other matters, the Board approved the Fire Alarm Inspection for the Judicial building for this week by Simplex-Grinnell and decided to form a committee of some of the multi-phone departments for considering re-programming the Courthouse telephone system before December 31, 2006. They also approved the Payroll Claim and Allowance Docket for the Pay Period ended September 23, 2006 as presented; an Indiana Criminal Justice Institute Grant for the Prosecutor’s office; and the Wabash County Tourism Committee minutes from August 21, 2006.

No other Business, the meeting recessed. The Board of Commissioners will meet again on Monday, October 2, 2006 in the Wabash County Courthouse at 9:00 A.M.