Tippecanoe County Board of Commissioners

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 6, 2023
10:00 am
Tippecanoe Room, Tippecanoe County Office Building
20 N 3rd Street, Lafayette, Indiana

Commissioners present President Tracy A. Brown, Vice President Thomas P. Murtaugh and Member David S. Byers.
Also present: Attorney Doug Masson, Auditor Jennifer Weston, Commissioners' Assistant Paula Bennett, and Recording Secretary Samantha Perez.

I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – President Brown called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK: MARCH 12TH – 18TH, 2023 – President Brown presented:

The Severe Weather Preparedness Week, March 12th – 18th,Proclamation was read aloud by Tippecanoe County Commissioner President Tracy Brown, West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis, Purdue Representative Jay Wasson, Lafayette City Clerk Cindy Murray, and TEMA Executive Director Wm. "Smokey" Anderson. The proclamation stated Severe Weather Preparedness Week in Tippecanoe County is March 12th – 18th and encourages all citizens to be aware of tornado danger signs, and to learn how to safeguard all lives in the event of severe weather activity in our area.

TIPPECANOE COUNTY
LAFAYETTE, WEST LAFAYETTE AND PURDUE UNIVERSITY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
PROCLAMATION

"SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK"
MARCH 12th – 18th, 2023

WHEREAS: The months of March through June present the highest risk for severe thunderstorms and tornadoes to strike Tippecanoe County; and

WHEREAS: Tippecanoe County is located within the nation's "Tornado Belt", becoming a prime target of devastating tornado outbreaks and other types of severe weather; and

WHEREAS: A statewide tornado warning exercise will be held on March 14, 2023 between 10:00 and 10:30 AM EDT for the purpose of testing communications systems, equipment and procedures; and

WHEREAS: During this week, the Tippecanoe County Emergency Management is emphasizing its safety procedures involving tornado activity;

NOW, THEREFORE:
We, the undersigned, do hereby proclaim the week of March 12th through 18th, 2023 as

SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS WEEK

in Tippecanoe County and encourage all citizens to become aware of tornado danger signs, and to learn how to safeguard the lives of their families, friends, and citizenry in the event of severe weather activity in our area.

BY COMMISSIONER: Tracy Brown, President
BY COMMISSIONER: Thomas Murtaugh, Vice President
BY COMMISSIONER: David Byers, Member
BY LAFAYETTE MAYOR: Tony Roswarski
BY WEST LAFAYETTE MAYOR: John Dennis
BY PURDUE UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE: Jay Wasson

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES from Monday, February 21, 2023.

- Commissioner Murtaugh moved to approve the minutes as presented, second by Commissioner Byers. Motion carried.

IV. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE – Paula Bennett presented and recommended:

The claims from February 23, 2023, through March 6, 2023, were recommended for approval without exception.

- Commissioner Byers moved to approve the Accounts Payable as presented, second by Commissioner Murtaugh. Motion carried.

V. PRESENTATION OF PAYROLL – Paula Bennett presented and recommended:

The payroll from March 3, 2023, was recommended for approval without exception.

- Commissioner Byers moved to approve the payroll as presented, second by Commissioner Murtaugh. Motion carried.

VI. AREA PLAN – Doug Poad presented and recommended:

A. **RESOLUTION 2023-04-CM,** Amending the Thoroughfare Plan, Volume 4 of the Comprehensive Plan for Tippecanoe County

Doug Poad, *Senior Transportation Planner*, advised that based on projected growth from the proposed developments, Area Plan recognizes the need for a new thoroughfare to move traffic north and south from Veterans Memorial Parkway to CR 600S. Seeing that there will be substantial growth in this area a new three quarters of a mile of road should be constructed and would eventually have a connection to the school. It will be classified as a nonresidential collector so that there would be a limited number of driveways and would have a trail along it to allow safe walkways for children to and from school. This plan was presented to the Technical Transportation Committee in December and then was presented and recommended to the policy board. It was approved in January then presented to Area Plan in February and was unanimously approved. This plan only recognizes the need that a new north/south road will need to be constructed. It does not set a timeline on the potential project or list any possible details.
Commissioner Byers asked why the road was not extended another three quarters of a mile. Doug stated there is an industrial area to the east and current road design does not algin within the industrial area. Also, this location would be the best due to the current development of 800 plus residential units near Concord Drive.
Commissioner Murtaugh asked if there are any existing roads along this new route and Doug stated the existing road will need to become part of the new plan and only need partial reconstruction.
Kristy Martin, *Tippecanoe County Recorder*, asked if there was a plan for a round about and Doug stated there are no details about construction. This plan is only a plan for possible placement of the road.

- Commissioner Murtaugh moved to approve RES 2023-04-CM, second by Commissioner Byers. Motion carried.

VII. HEALTH DEPARTMENT – Amy Erwin presented:

A. A contract with Mitchell & McCormick Inc, for a one-year renewal for medical billing services in the amount of $500.00.

- Commissioner Byers moved to approve the contract, second by Commissioner Murtaugh. Motion carried.

VIII. GM DEVELOPMENT COMPANIES, LLC, - Commissioner Murtaugh presented:

A. Commissioner Murtaugh stated the March 2023 Disbursement Request is in the amount of $491,633.60 and is for the jail and the additions to Community Corrections.

- Commissioner Murtaugh moved to approve the disbursement request, second by Commissioner Byers. Motion carried.

IX. VILLA – SHARECARE LLC, Contract – Commissioner Byers presented:

A. A contract with ShareCare for a consulting nurse at the Tippecanoe Villa to monitor medicine distribution and help with patient assistance. This contract is not to exceed $6,500.00.

- Commissioner Byers moved to approve the contract, second by Commissioner Murtaugh. Motion carried.

X. GRANTS – Sharon Hutchison presented and recommended:

Permission to Apply for Grants:

A. For the Tippecanoe County Commissioners, request $550,000 from the 2023 FSSA/DMHA collaboration match program of Opioid Settlement payment to further the ability of having resources available to our citizens needing assistance from the Tippecanoe Regional Opioid Community Committee.

- Commissioner Murtaugh moved to approve applying for the grant as presented, second by Commissioner Byers. Motion carried.

Permission to Accept Grant Funds:

A. Community Corrections was awarded $50,000 with no match to the County for Contingency Management. Jason Huber, *Executive Director Community Corrections*, stated this is a training grant to help train staff on substance abuse disorder and the grant provides incentives for individuals who pass drug screens. Commissioner Murtaugh asked if the grant states incentives is an allowable use and Jason stated yes.

- Commissioner Byers moved to accept the grant as presented, second by Commissioner Murtaugh. Motion carried.

XI. UNFINISHED / NEW BUISNESS

- None

XII. REPORTS ON FILE

- Building Commission February 2023 Report
- Central Mail, Accounts Payable, Duplications January 2023 Report
- Human Resources 2022 OSHA Report
- Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

President Brown addressed everyone in attendance by opening the floor for public comment regarding Gateway to Hope, Syringe Services, and Recovery Café. He asked for opposed to step forward first then followed by everyone who is in support of the move. He allowed a three-minute time slot for each person speaking. He stated The Recovery Café itself is an arrangement between private individuals so that activity did not have anything to do with the Board of Commissioners.

Opposed:

- Brent Justice, 309 North 23rd St., started by encouraging everyone to visit recoverycafrelafayette.org to learn more about the organization. He started off by demonstrating how this move fails to maximize or minimally achieve two of the County's primary responsibilities; helping those who need help and protecting those who need and deserve our protection. Since he is a parent, his primary concern is the children. He stated when the needle exchange closes no one will be escorting patrons out of the area, and police are discouraged from detaining citizens who will be traveling to or from the exchange site. This presents the problem of exposing our children to dangerous behavior. More young, school aged children walk through this neighborhood than any other. He also referenced section 5 of chapter 7.5 of the Indiana state Syringe Exchange Program Law stating the public was not made aware of this move until a lease was signed. Since there was not citizen involvement in the relocation, he presented a petition with 2,257 signatures gathered in less than nine days. (Attorney Masson reminded Brent of the three-minute time slot) Brent thanked the Commissioners for their time.

- Katina North, 309 North 23rd St., shared her feelings as a mother and local resident. When she heard about the new location, she listened to community leaders speak and callously brush off children's safety. Since then, she has created a petition, made phone calls, and sent emails to figure out "what went wrong." She asked why Murdock, Sunnyside, and Lafayette Christian School parents and teachers were not notified of the relocation. She stated she trusted the well-being of her children in the school's care but now fears for children as they walk to and from school. No one can guarantee the children will not be targeted for their electronic devices and no one can guarantee the children will not be exposed to physical or emotional trauma.

- Cindy Martin, West Lafayette, stated she has an uncle who resides at The Springs which is located directly across the street from the proposed needle exchange location. The Springs allows family members to visit until 8:00 pm; however, they do not have personal point of entry security. Due to the lack of security, there is no guarantee there will not be a drifter or an unwanted individual on the premises of The Springs or St. Mary's. She continued by asking everyone involved in this decision how much research of police activity in the area was reviewed in the process. She referenced the police scanner she was listening to and heard an individual went into Riehles Neighborhood Bar and Grill on Union Street, locked himself in the bathroom, and overdosed. This is only a two-minute walk from LTHC. (Attorney Masson reminded Cindy of the three-minute time slot) Cindy thanked the Commissioners for their time.

- Scott Abrams, 524 North 28th St., stated he is affected by this program for many personal reasons. He will be clean 8 years this month and is a father to a 10-year-old boy. Scott helps coach basketball and baseball and uses the field at Murdock which is located next to the proposed site. Last year the team found five needles, and this is without the program being there. He continued by reading a Facebook post he made about how absurd he feels this program is and how ridiculous it is to be so close to a school. He stated he also feels that a drug addict is not going to get help until that person is ready regardless of resources or services.

In support of:

- Nathaniel Mets, *President, and CEO of Phoenix Paramedics Solutions*, stated his organization currently provides addiction services to nine counties through several different grants. They assist with homelessness, addiction, peer recovery support, and have provided medical care since 2017. He also employs individuals who are in active recovery to help support EMTs and paramedics. His first instinct was to research common concerns with needle exchange programs. Outside of the common concerns there has not been research or studies to quantify these incidents. However, the research has shown that individuals engaged in a needle exchange program are 500% more likely to seek and be involved in addiction recovery services. He also believes that with Riggs Healthcare and Valley Oaks being located so close to the needle exchange location this can help make services more accessible to individuals who need it.

- Rhonda Stein, 1329 Palmer Dr., stated her 25-year-old son passed away 11 years ago from an overdose. She is in full support of these programs as she believes it will make a huge difference in the community. As a grandmother she understands the concern of protecting children but asked everyone to give these programs an opportunity to change the community.

- Grace Paton, 1950 South 18th St., *Harm Reduction Manager for Tippecanoe County Health Department and Gateway to Hope*, she started by addressing the incident that happened at Riehles Neighborhood Bar and Grill and mentioned she has family on staff there. They had Narcan on hand to help, there was not a threat with a knife, and when he was detained, he was compliant with officers. Also, employees do a community pickup multiple times a week around LTHC and in 3 years only about three syringes have been found. She added that just because the program is in operation does not mean the program is responsible for all needles found because anyone can purchase syringes at a pharmacy. Harm Reduction refers to a set of practices to minimize the negative consequences associated with drug use. That means it affects people who use drugs and people in the community who are affected by where the location is. Grace also stated she wants the program to be a part of the community and that also means being in a location where people can walk across the street to seek services with other resources.

- Brisher Vanderkolk, 910 Tippecanoe St., stated he believes everyone wants kids to grow up in a safe community and that the addicts in the community need access to services that help with addiction and recovery. The location being closer to other resources will benefit people seeking additional support. He added he is a father and someone who has friends who have overdosed. He said if he finds a needle at a park, he reminds his children not to touch it and believes if his children found a person who has overdosed that it would be more scarring than finding a needle, so he is support of the new location and the work they do.

- Bob Reiling, 204 Main St., *Lafayette Attorney*, shared a story how early in his career he represented a nonprofit organization that provided similar services. A location was picked out, it was an ideal location, and he attended a board of works meeting filled with concerned citizens. The concerns people had were genuine and real. However, the fears everyone had never took place. No matter where this location is there will be fear and concerns. Due to safeguards that will be in place hopefully in a year from now everyone who is concerned can see that their concerns have been alleviated and the program is successful.

- Nicole Adams, 245 Timbercrest Rd., would like everyone to think about a friend or coworker who has children that struggle with addiction. Every time you think about people who will use the syringe services please remember your friends, coworkers, and their children who need help and could benefit from these services.

- Hazey Shipp, 1003 North 9th St., *employee at LTHC Homeless Services*, she started by stating she is not speaking as an LTHC employee but as someone with personal experience. The Harm Reduction clinic is across the street from LARA. The Learning Adult Resource Academy also helps children with language barriers and there has not been an instance where an individual has caused harm or been involved in altercations with parents or

children. It is important to remember these are still people and members of the community and people tend to dehumanize them. These are typically people who have children and are being as responsible as they can with the addiction they have.

President Brown called on Dr. Loomis to speak.

- Dr. Loomis, *Tippecanoe County Health Officer*, started by addressing the audience and apologizing to the residents in attendance and stated he assumed this was not going to be a problem. As the communities Health Officer he would never intentionally endanger anyone. The program has been going on for 5 years and there has not been one single incident. (There were comments from the crowd and President Brown asked for Dr. Loomis to not be interrupted) He has considered many ways to fix this and would like to set up meetings with individuals to speak about concerns. The number one cause of Hep C problem in Indiana (77.6% cases) are people who inject drugs. He mentioned an email he read stating it would cost $100,000 to hire an officer to patrol that neighborhood. To treat Hep C for 12 weeks is $85,000. In 2017 those numbers peaked and due to the needle exchange program, those numbers dropped drastically even through Covid. He also said in the beginning of his career he did not necessarily agree with the program but had to learn to evolve and he is looking to have a conversation about how this program saves lives. (Inaudible dialog from the audience continues, President Brown asked the audience if they can let Dr. Loomis finish.) He apologized again to the audience for not seeing this issue escalating to this level. Dr. Loomis stated he appreciates the concern and looks forward to setting a meeting to discuss the concerns.

President Brown stated that the City of Lafayette, the mayor's office, the city councilmen, are not generally part of this discussion as the Board of Commissioners are the ones who authorize the SSPs.

(Inaudible dialog from the audience continues in attempt for more public comment with President Brown)

Commissioner Byers moved to adjourn. President Brown adjourned the meeting.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
THE COUNTY OF TIPPECANOE

Tracy A. Brown, President

Thomas P. Murtaugh, Vice-President

David S. Byers, Member

ATTEST:

Jennifer Weston, Auditor 03/20/2023

Minutes prepared by Samantha Perez, Recording Secretary